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Chapter Objectives

● Appreciate the nature of patrol work and be familiar with empirical data related to the use of time by patrol officers and officer productivity.

● Become familiar with various types of patrol, including random, directed, and aggressive patrol.

● Understand the implications of the Kansas City Patrol Experiment for the traditional model of policing and recognize the experiment’s weaknesses.

● Articulate the various types of patrol deployments, as well as studies related to their effectiveness.

● Know the nature and importance of the traffic function and its unique dangers.
In Akron, Ohio, two women were attacked within two months of each other. Only one of these women survived. The first attack took place in May 2002, and the victim had an order of protection against her ex-husband. Despite the order forbidding him to contact her or come within 100 yards of her, Karen Hunter’s ex-husband decided to pay her an unfortunate visit.

A neighbor saw Karen’s ex-husband dragging her into the home and called 911 immediately upon hearing her scream. Unfortunately, the police did not arrive at the home until 40 minutes after the 911 call, finding the victim stabbed to death on the kitchen floor.

The Akron Police Department did not react to this incident lightly. They made all domestic violence calls involving a court order a higher priority. In July 2002, the police responded to an incident similar to that of Karen and her ex-husband. Within minutes after receiving an emergency call, the police arrived at the house of Tracy Stoyer. Upon arriving at the scene, the responding officers heard screams, leading them to kick down the door and enter the home. When they reached Mrs. Stoyer, they found her bruised and bloody with impressions of fingers on her neck, but she was alive. In this case, Mrs. Stoyer claimed that the police’s response time had saved her life (Associated Press 2002).

Police response time to emergencies has traditionally been viewed as a central measure of departmental effectiveness. Although the patrol officer can make the life-saving difference in cases such as the example above, the realities of patrol are such that, more often than not, a quick response time will not make a significant difference in the outcome of the incident.

This chapter examines the essential role of patrol within policing, often referred to as the “backbone of policing” given its predominance within the overall designation of departmental resources (Walker 2002). In 2000, for example, 60 percent of all sworn officers were assigned to patrol duty (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2002).

Patrol officers are the most visible ambassadors for the police department. The nature of police–community relations can be shaped by citizen interactions with the patrol division more than any other part of the department. Even with the best-intentioned police chief, if departmental controls do not significantly affect patrol officer behavior, individual policies will fail. Moreover, citizen interactions with patrol are often used to frame an analysis of departmental priorities and policies.
This chapter will examine the critical role of patrol in contemporary policing. Although patrol plays such a significant role in the department, very few large-scale evaluations of its effectiveness have been carried out. Despite this, we know a great deal more about what works related to patrol than in the past, thanks to an explosion of police research throughout the 1970s and 1980s.
The Realities of Patrol

When the average person envisions a career in law enforcement, he or she is usually thinking of the patrol function as depicted on television: high-speed pursuits, chasing offenders through back alleys and crowded nighttime streets, or arriving at the scene of a robbery in progress to arrest and bring in the “bad guy.” Also common is for aspiring law enforcement professionals to have a glamorized version of the FBI, CIA, or CSI roles based upon media imagery. Although such activities do not represent the day-to-day realities of the patrol function, patrol officers are the most visible symbol of the law and must conduct themselves in a manner that inspires confidence and respect in the law.

Use of Time by Patrol Officers

Despite our perceptions about the nature of policing, empirical evaluations of the patrol function have consistently demonstrated that responding to crime is not the primary activity engaged in by officers on patrol. Some studies have suggested that only about 20 percent of all assigned calls involve active Part I and Part II offenses, as defined by the UCR (see Chapter 3) (Boydstun et al. 1977). Of these calls involving more serious offenses, 15 percent involved officers taking reports of crimes that had already occurred, and 8 percent involved checking on suspicious circumstances or individuals (Boydstun et al. 1977).

In the Police Services Study (PSS), officers from twenty-four departments were observed to determine how they spent their time and their interactions with citizens in sixty residential neighborhoods. The PSS found that, on average, two-thirds of an officer’s shift was “unassigned” (Whitaker 1982).
Most of this time was spent patrolling the beat and engaging in officer-initiated contacts with citizens; more often than not, these citizen encounters involved traffic-stop situations. In support of Boydstun et al.’s (1977) findings, the PSS found that only 38 percent of all observed encounters involved crime as the primary problem (Whitaker 1982).

Overall, officers engaged in information gathering more than any other activity. This included helping citizens and controlling offenders. Despite the central role of force discussed in Chapter 1, the PSS found that actual force was only used in 5 percent of all encounters, and this usually involved taking suspects by the arm or handcuffing them (Whitaker 1982). The threat of force, however, was more common, occurring in up to 14 percent of all encounters (Whitaker 1982). Interestingly, arrests occurred in only one out of every twenty PSS encounters. Other studies have found that officers can sometimes go months without ever reporting an arrest. One such study of officers in Washington, D.C., found that 46 percent made no arrests in a year (Forst et al. 1978)!

Productivity Measures

In light of the studies just described, one obvious question that emerges is how officer productivity should be measured. Are arrest quotas a sufficient gauge of an officer’s average job performance given that so little of their time is spent dealing with crime problems? In the absence of other indicators, how should command staff evaluate line officers? Despite the reported successes of the NYPD’s CompStat model, a significant number of reports have been published about the demoralizing effects the “pressure to produce” arrests play on the average officer (see Chapter 13). We will return briefly to the question of quotas as it relates to traffic enforcement at the end of this chapter.

Response time to calls for service has also been used as a measure of officer effectiveness, but here, too, one can run into some difficulties in practice. Although the public is generally thought to desire a quick response to their calls, the reality is that most of the time the speed of the officer’s arrival will make little difference to the outcome of the incident. Obviously a speedy response is a necessity in situations where the crime is in progress, such as the example at the beginning of this chapter. However, according to a PERF study, only 25 percent of cases involve an ongoing confrontation between a victim and an offender (Skogan and Attunes 1979). In most situations, particularly property offenses, the chance of case clearance is almost nonexistent if adequate information is not provided to the officer. If a patrol officer’s time might be better spent engaged in meaningful interactions with the community, should response time be such a significant determinant of performance?

Some departments, such as the Indiana State Police, no longer use arrest or ticket quotas as measures of officer performance. Instead, district commanders work with their troopers to craft performance goals that include community activities that most departments do not use as performance measures, such as interactions with the community and evidence of problem solving (Niederpruem 2000).

In sum, productivity or performance measures can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of police agencies. However, they should be based on an understanding not only of what the police actually do, but also what the police should do (Fridell 2000). According to Moore (1999), agencies should identify “what
matters” for the purposes of performance evaluation by considering overall accountability needs from the perspective of both internal command structures, as well as from the vantage point of citizen needs and those of other external authorizing environmental stakeholders.

Future research into performance measures should examine the following:

- How to link performance evaluation to accountability mechanisms within the department
- How best to incorporate the needs and expectations of community residents and external agencies into the performance evaluation system
- How to determine the impact of performance evaluation systems on departmental achievement of goals and objectives

Community policing activities require significant resource expenditure on tasks not captured by traditional performance measures. For example, collaborative problem-solving efforts can require attendance at community meetings, outreach to other city agencies/businesses, and addressing “noncrime” community problems. Community police officers often complain about the conflicting demands upon them to meet arrest quotas at the same time that they are engaged in these types of activities (Moore 1999). Even in departments where community police officers are excluded from regular response to calls for service, they may be the focus of resentment or ridicule from the regular patrol line officers, resulting in the loss of morale among such officers.

The Patrol Function

Whatever the incident, from the minor squabble between a cab driver and a patron to a serious domestic assault, an officer is generally the first to arrive at the scene, highlighting how the job can turn from mundane to life threatening within the blink of an eye. Given this wide range of possible daily interactions, the patrol officer serves many functions, including crime fighter, mediator, social worker, and service provider. Adams (2001) identifies several objectives of police field operations or patrol (Adams 2001):

- Protection and defense of lives and property
- Repression of criminal and delinquent behavior
- Identification, apprehension, and conviction of offenders
- Traffic flow and collision reduction
- Maintenance of order and public safety

In a newly developed training curriculum for both recruit and in-service officers, Kenney et al. (2002) categorize central patrol functions into three non-mutually exclusive types of interactions:

- Information gathering
- Conflict resolution
- Maintenance/restoration of control
As noted by Bittner (1990), at some level policing is always going to be about force or control, even when an officer is engaging in simple information-gathering activities. Conflict resolution also is a regular component of an officer’s interactions; therefore, good communication and problem-solving skills also are crucial to success. In many situations, such skills will also allow the officer to maintain control without having to resort to the use of force. However, once physical force becomes necessary, it can safely be said that the officer has lost control of the situation (not necessarily as a fault of their own actions), and the range of possible options for problem resolution has narrowed significantly (Kenney et al. 2002).

Types and Effectiveness of Patrol

Although the image of a police vehicle cruising slowly through a neighborhood is what we most often think of as patrol activity, police commonly use several different types of patrol, each with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Random, or Routine, Patrol

When engaged in random, or routine, patrol, officers assigned to a specific area move around in an “unsystematic” way (usually by motor vehicle) (Cordner and Trojanwicz 1992). The goals of this type of patrol are to detect crimes in progress and to deter crime through police presence. Because of the presumed deterrence effect, this type of patrol often is referred to as preventive.
patrol. Random patrol is said to be incident driven, or reactive, in that officers are responding to crimes only after they occur, either through rapid response to calls for service or to a violation or call in progress. Because officers are constantly moving while awaiting calls, the logic of random patrol dictates that they will be ready to respond to 911 calls, thereby lessening the time between call and response. The specific activities an officer engages in while on random patrol vary significantly across officers, times, locations, and departments, because much of the time spent on patrol is officer initiated.

**Directed Patrol**

Directed patrol focuses patrol resources on targeted hot spots, crime problems, and/or offenders. Crime statistics are used to assess crime patterns for strategic purposes. In addition to using data to isolate high-crime areas and peak times, directed patrol addresses the problem-identification component of the problem-solving process detailed in Chapter 12. Sometimes a directed patrol can occur on an informal level, with an experienced officer self-initiating “directed” patrol by regularly driving past hot spots during random wanderings. Parking the squad car in a specific location when writing reports and using the toilet in the back of a 7-Eleven that has been the source of problems are examples of such informal, directed activities.

To the extent that it attempts to target problems rather than simply respond to them, directed patrol can be viewed as a form of proactive patrol. Cordner (1981) notes that although directed patrol can have an immediate effect on certain crimes (i.e. gun crimes, street robberies), over time there may be a point of diminishing returns in terms of factors such as police–community relations. Additionally, it remains unclear whether such activities only serve to displace crime activities. Table 7.1 presents a comparison of random and directed patrol.

**Freeing Up Resources for Directed Patrol—Differential Response** A major downside to directed patrol is its significant costs. Directing greater police resources to one specific location and/or time often means taking them away from somewhere else or replacing them through overtime provisions and so on. To run directed patrol operations extensively, departments often have to engage in differential response strategies. Differential response involves the more effi-

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<td><strong>Random Patrol</strong></td>
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<td>Incident driven—Reactive</td>
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cient screening of calls for service at dispatch. Rather than treating all calls as deserving of the same priority, dispatchers screen incidents based on need for immediate response time. Some possible options involved in differential response include:

- Provide the caller with an estimate of how long it will take the patrol officer to respond.
- Have civilian personnel or a dispatcher take a report over the phone or have the complainant submit it via fax or over the Internet.
- Have a civilian, rather than a sworn officer, respond to the scene for less serious or cold cases.

Although we are often quick to judge the police based on how quickly they respond to our needs, the empirical research is somewhat mixed regarding the degree to which this affects overall dissatisfaction with police services. Although it is true that response time plays a part in overall satisfaction, researchers have found that such an evaluation is more closely related to civilians’ expectations of how quickly the police should arrive rather than just the actual response time (Percy 1980). Thus, departments that cannot afford the significant resources it would take to improve response time may be better served by a community relations campaign that stresses realistic arrival expectations for certain types of offenses. This also can be a component of differential response strategies.

Aggressive Patrol

Often considered a form of directed patrol, aggressive patrol refers to the use of high-profile patrol activities, such as frequent traffic stops and regular field interrogations. Aggressive patrol often involves crackdowns aimed toward drawing media attention in the hope that this will enhance any deterrent effect (Cordner and Trojanwicz 1992). For example, the targeting of known “crack rows” for the apprehension of offenders and later cleanup usually bring significant media attention. Strategies such as closing down street access to high drug trafficking locations have proven successful, such as the NYPD’s Model Block Program or similar efforts by many Weed and Seed programs by departments nationwide (Grant 2000; Grant and Jacobs 1998).

Sheppard et al. (2000) point to the need for community collaboration when engaging in aggressive patrol activities because of the seemingly disproportionate affect such strategies can have on certain segments of the population. In this case, a zero-tolerance program for gun violence in a predominantly lower-class African American community in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was implemented successfully after receiving community approval from clergy leaders and organizations, such as 100 Black Men (Sheppard et al. 2000). The degree to which such aggressive tactics successfully target offenders rather than average citizens can go a long way towards reducing community dissatisfaction (Boydstun 1975).

The results of the Kansas City Gun Experiment, in which intensive patrols targeted an 80-block, high-crime area with traffic stops and field interrogations, revealed that aggressive patrol can significantly reduce gun crimes, such as drive-by shootings and homicides. Most important, no displacement effects were observed (at least in the short term of the study) (Sherman et al. 1995).
Saturation Patrol

Placing extremely high levels of patrol within a narrowly defined geographic area is referred to as **saturation patrol**. Although empirical findings are mixed, some evidence indicates that saturation patrol can reduce crime (Wilson 1975), but that the suppressive effect may be limited to certain times of day (Carr et al. 1980) and depends on reaching a certain “tipping point” in terms of number of officers. In the latter case, increases from one to two officers in a beat made no difference, but as more were added there were increasingly greater effects on crime (Bright 1969).

The Effectiveness of Patrol

Different types of patrol will be more effective depending on the specific crime and location being targeted. An **integrated patrol**, combining random patrol with any of the other more intensive tactics, might be successful in suppressing open-air activities, but the degree to which this lasts over time or leads to crime displacement is difficult to gauge. What we do know, however, based on patrol studies from the 1970s and 1980s, is that random patrol on its own does not significantly affect criminal activity. The study most responsible for bringing this point home to the police community and forcing a reconsideration of the role of random patrol as a policing strategy was the **Kansas City Patrol Experiment**.

The Kansas City Patrol Experiment

At the request of the Kansas City Police Department, and funded by the Police Foundation, the Kansas City Patrol Experiment was conceived of in 1972 as a means of evaluating the true ability of random patrol to reduce crime and fear of crime. Random patrol’s ability to meet these two goals had been accepted on faith rather empirical research prior to this time.

To conduct the quasi-experiment, researchers divided fifteen patrol beats in the south side of the city into three types of intervention activities (Kelling et al. 1974) (Figure 7.1). In the **reactive beats**, all random patrol activity was suspended; patrol officers only responded to calls for service in the area and then would quickly retreat. **Normal levels of patrol were maintained in the control beats**, allowing patrol to function as it had prior to the intervention. Finally,
proactive beats were established that had three times the level of random patrol activity.

Over the course of the study, between 1972 and 1973, the researchers closely monitored whether displacement effects were occurring or if the pattern of crime was significantly changing in the reactive beats. Should this have occurred, as many Kansas City officers and personnel predicted, the experiment would have been called off immediately for ethical reasons.

However, this never occurred. In fact, no significant differences were found between the three areas in terms of either crime, fear of crime, or even attitudes toward the police. The assumption by experts that random patrol had a deterrent effect appeared to be faced with its first real challenge. Varying the levels of random patrol appeared to have no effect on crime. The authors of the study were quick to point out that the findings in no way suggested that patrol was unnecessary or could operate effectively with significantly fewer resources (Wilson 1975).

In the years since the study was completed, some critics have questioned the experiment’s central findings. For example, it has been argued that a visible presence was inadvertently maintained in the reactive area by specialized units not participating in the experiment, as well as a higher incidence of such activities as siren use and more than one unit responding to a call for service (Larson 1975). Some authors claim that heightened perception of presence also resulted in residual deterrence, in which people believe patrol is working in their area because they had seen the police recently, either responding to a call the previous day or in another beat of the city (Sherman 1990).

Walker (2001) argues that the Kansas City Experiment could only meaningfully serve as an evaluation of the level of patrol. Whether certain types of patrol are more effective than others was not examined. For example, officers engaging in activities outside the “traditional box” of patrol might see greater reductions in both fear of crime and/or actual crime. In fact, some of the studies discussed in this chapter with respect to aggressive, saturation, and directed patrol would indicate that there is some validity to this statement.

Others argue that the analysts in the study only looked at overall numbers in the experimental areas rather than factoring different styles of policing (Cordner and Trajanwicz 1992). That “aggressive” order maintenance and hot-spot policing have been associated with decreased criminal activity offer some support for these assertions. Despite such challenges to the study’s validity and implications, the results of the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment have largely been accepted by the law enforcement community. Few efforts have since attempted to verify or refute its findings. It is important to use caution in generalizing from any one study to all areas without being aware of all factors involved in the study and their related reliability and validity concerns.

However, the challenges these findings present to the traditional model of policing propagated during the Reform Era cannot be underestimated. In many ways, later developments related to community and problem-oriented policing reflect a sentiment that innovations are necessary if policing is ever able to contribute meaningfully to crime or fear reduction in the community. As Goldstein (1990) notes:

Upon discovering that their traditional methods were not as effective as previously assumed, the police realized the need to enlist the community in preventing crime.
But it was clear that this would not be accomplished simply by renewing the old campaigns. The police were going to have to cultivate an entirely different type of relationship with the people that they served. (p. 23)

These findings thus went a large way toward laying the foundations of the community-policing movement detailed in Chapter 12.

Patrol Methods

Many methods of patrol are in use today. The particular method used depends greatly upon the terrain being covered and the jurisdiction’s specific needs. However, unquestionably the two most common patrol methods are automobile and foot patrol.

Automobile Patrol

Automobile patrol is by far the most common patrol method used, encompassing 84 percent of all patrol activities in 1997 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999). Probably the greatest reason for the predominance of this method of patrol is the significant mobility and flexibility offered to the patrol officer. Not only does the method allow for wider coverage, especially with improvements in communication and information technology, but it also offers quick response to calls for service. Moreover, it is far easier to transport suspects back to the precinct in an automobile. In areas without accessible or manageable roads, such as beaches, some jurisdictions rely heavily on alternatives to the automobile, such as ATVs and dirt bikes.

The method is not without its limitations, however. For example, officer vision is significantly restricted during automobile patrol, and unless an officer gets out of the car, he or she is unable to view many activities taking place on the street. Moreover, as demonstrated by the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment, random patrol by automobile alone has a limited deterrent effect. Part of this may be due to the fact that a great number of Part I crimes occur indoors, outside of the scope of motor vehicle patrol efforts (Walker 2001). Some experts also argue that although there might be an initial deterrent effect resulting from random automobile patrol, crime will either be displaced from regularly patrolled areas or simply return as soon as the vehicles have passed.

As noted in Chapter 3, a major problem with an overreliance on automobile patrol is the distancing of law enforcement from the community it serves. Although this may have had the benefit of “professionalizing” the police, removing many of the corruptive influences associated with the intimate connection to the community prevalent during the Political Era, it has also contributed to a great divide between law enforcement and their beats. Police officers no longer know the specific contexts and issues, as well as politics and personality dynamics, that they had when they were on their feet interacting with the community each shift.

Safety concerns also have arisen due to the fact that the majority of automobile patrol activities consist of one-officer cars. A central reason for departmental preference for one as opposed to two-officer cars is the overall cost-efficiency of this approach. One-officer deployments can cover twice as much area and respond to twice as many calls as a two-officer deployment system (Walker 2001). Although many patrol officer unions have protested
against departmental shifts from two-officer to one-officer systems on safety grounds, a Police Foundation study found that one-officer cars were actually involved in fewer assaults and fewer arrest incidents than two-officer cars (Boydstun et al. 1977).

Of course, such a finding can be explained by other factors than that one-officer cars are simply equally safe. For example, one-officer cars might be less likely to observe crimes in progress or more reticent to get involved before first calling for back up. In response to such a claim, Boydston et al. (1977) note that in only 2.8 percent of all incidents did one-officer cars call for back-up following arrival to the scene.

**Foot Patrol**

Although there has been a significant push for a return to foot patrol following the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment, and with the corresponding impetus for community policing and problem-solving models, it only represents roughly 4 percent of all patrol activities (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999). Foot patrol seriously limits the area an officer can cover on his or her shift. Similarly, although communications technology (e.g., radios and cellular phones) has significantly improved interactions between the foot patrol officer and precinct, response time is generally slower with foot patrol officers for obvious reasons.

However, despite the challenges of limited mobility, patrol officers are better poised to monitor and identify crimes in progress within buildings or in areas that would be out of the visual path of a passing cruiser.

Patrol studies following the Kansas City Patrol Experiment have also identified an additional significant advantage to foot patrol: the ability to influence fear of crime in the community. Using a design similar to that used in Kansas City with random patrol, researchers who conducted the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment found that, as with earlier patrol studies, increased foot patrol did not appear to have a significant effect on overall crime levels in the community (Police Foundation 1981). However, citizens in the intensive foot patrol beats reported significantly more positive attitudes toward the police as well as reductions in fear of crime (Police Foundation 1981). Such findings led to a resurgence in the use of foot patrol officers in many pilot community-policing programs throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.

**Motorcycle and Bicycle Patrols**

Foot patrol is generally limited to small, clearly defined areas that automobile patrol cannot access. However, where patrol officers need to cover greater distances than would be possible on foot, many departments offer the use of
motorcycles and bicycles. **Motorcycles** are particularly useful in traffic enforcement activities given their ability to negotiate heavy traffic situations (Adams 2001). Motorcycles also are indispensable in cases of high-profile police escorts and parades.

In tighter areas, such as pedestrian-only streets, malls, or parks, patrol officers may use **bicycles** (Adams 2001). The use of bicycles maintains the foot patrol’s benefits of high visibility and approachability while at the same time increasing the officer’s mobility.

### Horse Patrols

Similarly, but used far less frequently, **horse patrol** offers mobility to officers in places inaccessible to automobiles or even motorcycles, such as parks and wild terrain. Even in urban crowd settings, such as during a parade or protest, the horse patrol can offer officers greater visibility of the masses of people in crowd control situations due to the overall stature of the horse.

### Water and Helicopter Patrols

**Harbor or water patrol** is a necessity for jurisdictions bordering shorelines, beaches, or lakes given the tremendous amount of illegal activity that can begin on the water. Because “the smuggling of people and contraband from coastal waters into inland harbor areas is a constant problem . . . investigation and apprehension can be accomplished only with the aid of boats and helicopters” (Adams 2001, p. 129).
**Patrol Deployment**

As evidenced throughout the chapters so far, patrol deployment practices have developed considerably since the earliest days of law enforcement in the United States. The reliance on up-to-date statistics to inform decision making related to patrol deployment and resource distribution enables departmental planners to have a greater chance to understand and resolve crime-related problems across diverse contexts. In addition to methods of patrol, patrol deployment has provided us with insight into the effective use of military troops in occupation circumstances.

**Rotating versus Assigned Shifts**

Rotating shifts were developed during the Reform Era as a means of combating police corruption. Rotating shifts refers to the rotation of officers across either different working hours or different divisions within the department. In contrast, assigned shifts involve officer assignment to the same shifts and/or areas for extended periods of time.

**Time of Day and Shift Hours**

Most jurisdictions have a three-shift structure, sometimes referred to as tricks or watches. For example, the NYPD organizes its shifts across three eight-hour periods:

- **7 AM to 3 PM (watch)**
- **3 PM to 11:30 PM (swing watch)**
- **Midnight (11 PM to 7 AM) (dog watch)**

If a department utilizes a rotating shift structure for working hours, an officer will gradually progress through each of the shift periods. For example, an officer might work the swing watch, progress to dog watch, and finally day watch, staying on each shift generally for a period of a few weeks.

The most popular shift plan is an eight-hour shift structure. With an eight-hour plan, officers generally work five days a week for eight hours and then get two days off. Following an additional five days, the officer will receive four days off. Some jurisdictions utilize a twelve-hour plan where officers work three 12-hour days and then have the next four days off.

**Fatigue**

Fatigue is a problem with shift work. PERF has conducted a series of studies to measure the effects of officer fatigue on job performance. In addition to the obvious health costs, it has been found that fatigue can lead to severe impairment of cognitive and motor coordination, thereby lowering productivity and/or leading to accidents (Vila 2000).

The important role of discretion in policing was emphasized in Chapter 1. Given the discretionary powers of officers, and the fact that they may at any time be called upon to use force, the potential dangers of officer fatigue cannot be underestimated.
Not surprisingly, the problems of fatigue need to be considered when deciding on the appropriate shift structures in patrol, both in terms of rotating versus assigned shifts and the length of each shift. Unfortunately, only a limited amount of research in this area has been conducted (Vila 2000); the majority of empirical studies related to fatigue are in the fields of nursing and public health. Constantly rotating officers through each of the three shifts can ultimately take a toll on an officer’s health, ability to manage stress, interpersonal relationships, and daily functioning (Vila 2000). Anyone who has ever flown an international flight across time zones knows how difficult it can be to adjust to significant changes in one’s sleep patterns. Research on our internal biological clocks, or circadian rhythms, supports the claim that at least six months are required to adjust to changes in sleep patterns. Rotating shifts thus alter circadian rhythms with long-term negative consequences (Milia and Bowden 2007). The toll rotating shifts can have on one’s family life is also worth mentioning. The many other stressors related to shift work and the nature of policing are detailed in Chapter 9.

Some research indicates that officers on an eight-hour shift structure can be more sleep deprived than those on twelve-hour shifts (Vila 2000). The likely reason for this finding is that following a three-day work week, officers in the twelve-hour structure have the next four days off to rejuvenate. However, before taking these findings as indicative of a need to change departmental shifts to twelve hours (which would be a significant move given that most departments follow an eight-hour system), an important word of caution is necessary: Toward the end of a twelve-hour shift officers also exhibit signs of sleep deprivation, thereby diminishing their effectiveness and productivity (Vila 2000).

**Personnel Allocation**

Proactive police departments make decisions about level and target of patrol deployments based on a review of all available data sources (Thibault et al. 2001). Peak times and areas thus receive proportionately larger numbers of patrol officers per shift. In some cases, deployment decisions might be made on the basis of a specific crime problem or issue rather than overall rates.

However, the collaborative effort and proactive problem solving required by community-policing models requires more than simply directing resources to an area or specific time. An intimate knowledge of the community is essential for true problem solving to occur, an issue that will be detailed at length throughout Chapter 12. Part of this intimate knowledge includes an acquaintance with key leaders in the community who might be important collaborators in addressing the issues at hand. As such, many departments opt for assigned shifts in which officers patrol the same beat and time period for extended periods of time. Working the same shifts is important in that a community can change significantly depending on the time of day, as can the influence of key players in the community. Thus, officers on assigned shifts may be more acquainted with the concerns of their beat.

Some departments have taken lessons from the corporate model, providing officers with a wide range of experiences across divisions that can help them as they move toward advancement in the agency. Following rotation across divisions, officers are returned to patrol in a senior status, such as field training officers for new recruits (Thibault et al. 2001).
Foot Patrol versus Automobile Patrol Assignments

In most departments, police officers are assigned a sector each shift at roll call, which is called a tour. Interestingly, in many departments rookie officers are assigned to foot patrol. Although in many small and medium-sized departments foot patrol is a desired assignment, some large departments need to work to remove the stigma that foot patrol is undesirable and to be avoided. However, some research has demonstrated that officers on foot patrol or who have the opportunity to interact frequently with the community actually have higher levels of job satisfaction (Grant and Jacobs 1998). These officers report a sense of accomplishment from their interactions, learning that even in the most high-crime areas the majority of citizens are respectable and law abiding.

Balancing the Proactive and Reactive Models—Integrated Patrol

As noted earlier, automobile patrol has important benefits that will continue to make it essential to patrol division activities, even if it cannot reduce crime or fear of crime by itself. The need to cover large distances in a short amount of time is critical in emergency situations. Additionally, note that the vast majority of municipal police departments are small agencies covering large, rural areas with as few as ten officers on staff. Under such circumstances, foot patrol is not even a practical option.

The finding that foot patrol can play an important role in reducing fear of crime and enhancing police–community interactions has made it an important element of community-policing models. The 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act provided funding for an additional 100,000 officers nationally to increase the availability of officers for foot patrol and other community-policing functions.

Traffic Goals and Enforcement

Traffic enforcement is arguably the most undervalued division within law enforcement in terms of status, primarily because it does not fit into the traditional “crime enforcer” image many members of the public hold. Moreover, most members of the public feel resentment when interacting with officers engaged in the traffic function, because such interactions often result in a ticket and corresponding fine. However, the importance of the professional handling of a traffic stop, even in the face of an irritable public, cannot be underestimated in that this is the most common interaction the average citizen has with law enforcement. The nature of the interaction can thus carry weight in terms of police–community relations.

Public safety on streets and highways is the overarching goal of traffic enforcement. The majority of state and municipal law enforcement agencies have responsibility for the enforcement of traffic regulations, or moving violations, to ensure this safety (Dempsey 1999).

Thibault, Lynch, and McBride (2001) outline a number of the more important functions performed by the traffic division:

- Eliminating accident causes and congestion
- Identifying potential traffic problems and hazards
- Regulating parking on street and municipal facilities
- Investigating property damage and personal-injury automobile accidents
- Directing public awareness toward the proper use of automobiles, bicycles, and motorcycles
- Arresting offenders

Another important function of traffic patrol is to route traffic around special events, such as parades and protests. Note that although the largest police departments in the country have specialized traffic patrol functions, these duties are covered by regular patrol in the majority of small to medium-sized departments.

Traffic enforcement became a very important part of American law enforcement in the early urban environment of cities such as New York and Chicago. Johnson (1981) notes how the movement of people and goods throughout cities was constantly jeopardized by massive disorder:

Horsecar drivers frequently raced one another through the streets, paying no attention to the discomfort of their passengers or the danger to pedestrians. Wagon drivers and coachmen often disputed rights-of-way, sometimes to the point of assaulting one another. Pedestrians wandered haphazardly across the streets. At busy intersections, it was every man for himself as dozens of drivers sought to force their way through a maze of competing vehicles. (p. 36)

In order to eliminate such disorder, cities created numerous ordinances to regulate proper traffic behavior through fines and penalties. However, as Johnson stresses, compliance was not an instantaneous development with “thousands of people unaccustomed to these kinds of laws provid(ing) enough work to keep as much as one-third or more of the city’s police busy writing citations” (Johnson 1981, p. 39).

Traffic enforcement became even more complicated with the advent of automobiles, particularly as they moved from being “toys for the wealthy” to cheap and commonly owned following the introduction of the Ford Model T. With such developments, law enforcement had to evolve. For example, as travel outside of the city became more popular for the average citizen and criminals alike, state police had to evolve to meet a changing, increasingly mobile enforcement context.
The multi-agency investigation of the Washington, D.C., area sniper case highlights the important use of automated traffic surveillance technology in attempts to identify offenders’ vehicles.

The Dangers of Traffic Stops

The dangers inherent to traffic stops are often not fully appreciated by members of the public. However, many officers are killed each year, and thousands more injured in the course of traffic stops gone wrong. In 1999, over half the officers killed in the line of duty were killed in a traffic-related incident (Onder 2002). From 1996 through 2005, 48 percent of all officers killed in the line of duty were killed in traffic-related incidents, including 18 percent of those who were killed feloniously (U.S. Department of Justice 2006). When traffic stops require the use of officers’ weapons, the percentage of officer fatalities increases significantly (Onder 2002).

What might start out as a routine traffic stop for a minor violation can very quickly escalate when an officer learns that he or she is dealing with a wanted offender, an impaired driver, a car containing contraband, and so on. Under such circumstances, an officer might face a desperate (and potentially armed) offender. The fact that many major offenders in U.S. law enforcement history (e.g., Timothy McVeigh, Ted Bundy, Randall Kraft) were captured as a result of a routine traffic stop should drive this point home to the reader.

High-risk traffic stops are those where the officer is aware that the driver has committed a felony. Such stops often are the finale to a high-speed pursuit. In these cases, the vehicle may have been identified as stolen or people in the car are suspected of being involved in a serious offense, such as murder, rape, or robbery. The fact that such stops are extremely dangerous needs little explanation.
Role of Patrol in Detecting Terrorist Activities

The role of federal law enforcement agencies in combating terrorism would never have been a surprise to anyone, even prior to September 11. The need for global intelligence activities seemed well-suited for the international FBI field offices, but of little use to the local police department.

One of the most disturbing facts that resonated in the U.S. law enforcement community with the collapse of the World Trade Center was the fact that the reach of terrorism actually extended so much further than we had thought—the first responders to a terrorist act will invariably be local law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency services personnel.

On September 11, a total of 343 firefighters and 23 NYPD officers died at the World Trade Center. Dozens of firefighters and police officers went directly to the scene, and many of these first responders died (ABC News 2002). As a result, the law enforcement community has moved quickly to revise its training, deployment, and communication strategies in order to be better prepared for future terrorist attacks. In New York City, a consulting firm was contracted to review the events of that day, reviewing radio transmissions, records, and conducting dozens of interviews. As a result of the firm’s findings, a significant change in deployment strategy has been controlling the number of personnel who respond at any one time to an event.

September 11 also highlighted the need for specialized knowledge within police operations, leading to the creation of special counterterrorism units in many departments. Although the FBI had created localized task forces to coordinate law enforcement resources related to terrorism, clearly information was slipping through the cracks, as noted in Chapter 1.

The importance of law enforcement being in touch with the community, a reality before September 11, is now even more important as President Bush calls for the “vigilance” of residents to serve as the eyes and ears of law enforcement. Patrol officers are faced with renewed cultural challenges as they try to connect with Muslim segments of the community in the face of a rising tide of misunderstandings and accusations of racial profiling, particularly as the federal government has turned to the registration of people of Middle Eastern descent. However, it is only with the trust of the community that law enforcement can hope to get needed information related to suspicious activities. The reality that there are active terrorist cells in the United States cannot mean that all members of a group become suspects. This very difficult issue will be addressed further in Chapter 10.

An important issue for patrol officers is how the “war” on terrorism affects their typical response. The delicate balance remains that they still must operate within legal norms, even when military-style tactics and/or assistance may be needed (White 2001). Although public safety will always be a pertinent goal with respect to dealing with terrorism, law enforcement cannot act with impunity. In some Latin American countries, semi-military police have justified the practice of “disappearances” of suspected citizens on the basis of terrorist groups being too strong.

QUESTIONS
1. What are the most significant changes to the role of patrol officers post–September 11?
2. What specific strategies can law enforcement develop to collaborate more effectively with the Muslim community?
3. What tactics might you use to gain information on suspected terrorist cells in the community? What tactics would you consider to be going too far?

Unlike the routine traffic stop situation, the danger of stopping such a vehicle is known in advance.

The Supreme Court has recognized the inherent dangers involved in traffic stops, granting officers the right to order all passengers out of
the car for officer safety concerns (see *Maryland v. Wilson*, discussed in Chapter 5).

**Automated Traffic Enforcement**

One of the most interesting developments in the area of traffic control and traffic policing has been the growing use of automated tracking technology. Typically consisting of a system of cameras (positioned at or near cross-streets) fitted with sophisticated motion detectors, these systems are able to monitor traffic flow and provide traffic authorities with accurate information on road usage. Where these cameras also are linked to some form of video-monitoring system, they can be used by law enforcement agencies to conduct searches for particular types of vehicles or even individual suspects. Even small municipalities may find this equipment to be affordable; manufacturers are utilizing a fee system in which free equipment and installation is offered, with a percentage of all revenue generated through tickets paid to the company.

A good example of such a system is currently in operation in New York City. Originally established to help improve traffic flows on Manhattan Island, the system is now used by the police for such things as monitoring street sellers, searching for stolen vehicles, and policing public demonstrations. Indeed, the use of such systems by the police has led some civil libertarians to complain that such monitoring threatens individual privacy, particularly in light of the fact that this form of police surveillance activity is almost completely unregulated.

The potential uses of such technology have been demonstrated in some high-profile cases. For example, during the five-jurisdiction search for D.C. snipers John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, who killed ten individuals and injured two more over a period of twenty-three days in 2002, hundreds of hours of traffic surveillance tapes were reviewed at locations and times near to each of the crime scenes (where such cameras are located) to try and identify the sniper’s vehicle and license plate. Although the surveillance tapes were not ultimately involved in the suspects’ capture, the use of these tapes demonstrates the need to better integrate such technologies into the routine and daily work of large police departments.
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Random patrol is an incident-driven or reactive form of patrol. Directed patrol involves targeting patrol resources on hot spots, crime problems, and/or offenders, usually based upon an analysis of crime trends. Aggressive patrol refers to the use of high-profile activities, such as intensive traffic stops and field interrogations. Finally, saturation patrol is when a department places extremely high numbers of patrol in a very narrowly defined area.

- The Kansas City Gun Experiment and other studies indicate that directed, aggressive, and saturation patrols can have immediate effects on crime. However, the effectiveness of such strategies can reach a point of diminishing returns.

- Given the finding that not all calls require equal response times and the need to free up patrol resources for more proactive or directed patrol activities, many departments use differential response strategies. In such cases, dispatchers will either take the report over the phone, send a civilian to take the report, or explain to the caller that a sworn officer will be there in a specified (but longer) period of time.

- The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment found that random patrol used alone has no significant effect on crime, fear of crime, or even attitudes toward the police. This finding was significant given the reliance on this type of patrol at the time, forcing the law enforcement community to reexamine its methods. The movement toward proactive community-policing models began following this and a series of other key findings.

- Although foot patrol represents only a small proportion of total patrol resources, studies such as the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment have found that it can have a significant effect on residents’ fear of crime, even if it does not significantly reduce crime itself.

- Decisions related to shift structure (i.e., rotating versus assigned; number of hours) need to be made cautiously. Studies have demonstrated the serious effects fatigue can play on officers’ cognitive and motor skills, which could possibly lead to serious mistakes on the job. The type and structure of patrol can also impact the success of community-policing models in an area.

- The traffic division is often underestimated. It can be one of the most dangerous patrols for officers, regardless of whether they are dealing with a routine or high-risk (felony) stop situation. Recent Supreme Court decisions have recognized the importance of officer safety in traffic stop situations.

Linking the Dots

1. Explain the significance of the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment to policing. How did it help shift policing from reactive to proactive strategies?
2. What productivity measures should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of patrol officers?
3. How can a patrol officer’s job be affected by issues of linkage blindness within the department?
4. Explain the role of foot patrol in community policing. What other patrol deployment and shift-structure decisions should a department wishing to implement community policing consider?
References


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NOTE

1. 519 U.S. 408 (1997).