CHAPTER 3

The Contemporary Law Enforcement Industry

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Law enforcement in the United States is a large and extremely complex enterprise. There are almost 18,000 federal, state, and local agencies, along with a private security industry that employs over a million additional people.

Several basic features characterize the law enforcement industry. Most important is the tradition of local political control. The primary responsibility for police protection rests with local governments: cities and counties. This tradition was inherited from England during the colonial period.

As a result, American policing is highly fragmented. There is no formal, centralized system for coordinating or regulating all the different agencies. There are some mechanisms for federal and state regulation of local police. They are discussed later in this chapter.

Fragmentation produces tremendous variety. Police services are provided by four different levels of government: city, county, state, and federal. Agencies at each level have very different roles and responsibilities. Within each category, moreover, there is tremendous variety. The six largest police departments—New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Houston, and Detroit—are very different from the 9,555 police departments with fewer than 25 officers.

As a result of this variety, it is very difficult to generalize about American policing. All police departments have some characteristics in common, but most generalizations about the “typical” police department are extremely risky. Writing about the county sheriff, David N. Falcone and L. Edward Wells reject the common assumption that “policing is policing” and argue that the sheriff “represents a historically different mode of policing that needs to be distinguished more clearly from municipal policing.”

An “Industry” Perspective

Because of its fragmentation and variety, it is useful to take an industry perspective on American law enforcement. This approach provides a comprehensive picture of all the different producers of police services in a particular area.

The industry approach also provides a consumer’s perspective on policing. On a typical day, the average citizen receives police services from several different agencies. Consider the case of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. The small local police department patrols their suburban neighborhood. Mrs. Smith works downtown, where she is...
served by the big-city police department. Mr. Smith is a sales representative and
drives through small towns and areas patrolled by the county sheriff. The office
building where Mrs. Smith works hires private security guards. On her way home,
Mrs. Smith drives on the Interstate highway, which is patrolled by the state patrol.
Meanwhile, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement
Agency (DEA), and other federal agencies are at work investigating various viola-
tions of federal law.

Exhibit 3–1 indicates the various components of the law enforcement industry.

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**EXHIBIT 3–1**

**Components of the American Law Enforcement Industry**

**Government Agencies**

*Local*
- Municipal police
- County police
- County sheriffs

*State*
- State police
- Bureaus of criminal investigation

*Federal*
- Federal law enforcement agencies
- Military law enforcement

*Special district police*
- Public schools
- Transit police
- College and university police

*Native American tribal police*

**Private Security**
- Private security firms
- Security personnel
An International Perspective

A quick look at law enforcement in other countries provides a useful perspective on the decentralization and fragmentation of American law enforcement.

England, with a population one-fourth that of the United States, has forty-three police departments: forty-one provincial departments and two police forces in London. This is half the number of law enforcement agencies in the state of Nebraska (total of ninety-three). All forty-three agencies are administered by the home secretary, who is one of the top officials in the national government (and in some respects the equivalent of the attorney general in the United States). Each provincial department also answers to a local police commission. The home secretary has the power to issue administrative regulations on personnel and police operations. Additionally, each of the forty-three police departments receives 51 percent of its annual budget from the home secretary’s office, giving it the power to enforce regulations.  

The Japanese police system also balances central coordination with local control. The National Police Agency is responsible for coordinating the operations of the forty-seven prefectural police. Each prefecture is officially independent, but the National Police Agency can recommend operational standards and, as in England, provides a significant part of each local agency’s budget.  

Size and Scope of the Law Enforcement Industry

The Number of Law Enforcement Agencies

There are just under 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States. This includes 12,766 local police departments, 3,067 sheriff’s departments, 49 state police agencies, 1,481 special police agencies, and 65 federal agencies (Exhibit 3–2).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Agency</th>
<th>Number of agencies</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Sworn</td>
<td>Civilian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,076,897</td>
<td>731,903</td>
<td>344,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105,252</td>
<td>45,982</td>
<td>59,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17,876</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local police</td>
<td>12,766</td>
<td>573,152</td>
<td>446,974</td>
<td>126,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td>3,067</td>
<td>326,531</td>
<td>175,018</td>
<td>151,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td>27,004</td>
<td>11,784</td>
<td>15,220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State police</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>89,265</td>
<td>58,190</td>
<td>31,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special jurisdiction</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>85,126</td>
<td>49,398</td>
<td>35,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constable/marshal</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>2,823</td>
<td>2,323</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Myth of 40,000 Agencies

For many years there was great controversy over exactly how many law enforcement agencies exist in the United States. In 1967 the President’s Crime Commission incorrectly reported that there were 40,000 agencies, repeating an unconfirmed figure that had been used for years. The correct figure is about 18,000 state and local agencies.

The typical police department is very small. As Exhibit 3–3 indicates, about half (50.4 percent) have nine or fewer sworn officers. The 168 largest departments, which represent less than 1 percent of the departments, employ about 40 percent of all full-time sworn officers.

The Number of Law Enforcement Personnel

In 2004 there were 731,903 full-time sworn law enforcement officers employed by local and state law enforcement agencies (Exhibit 3–2). In addition there were 105,000 federal law enforcement officers authorized to carry firearms and make arrests in 2004 (this figure, however, does not include military law enforcement personnel). The number of state and local law enforcement personnel has grown significantly since 1992. By 2004 there were about 27 percent more full-time employees than in 1992.

Understanding Law Enforcement Personnel Data

There is often much confusion about law enforcement personnel data. The important question is, How much police protection does a community receive? The total number...
of employees includes clerical staff and civilian specialists in computers, criminalistics, and so on. The number of sworn officers refers to those employees who are legally recognized as police officers, with full arrest power and the like.

It is also important to distinguish between an agency’s authorized strength and the number of sworn officers currently employed. Because of retirements, resignations, and terminations, most departments are below their authorized strength. The annual average attrition rate is about 5 percent.12 Hiring is often delayed as a way of allowing the city or county to cope with a budget shortfall.13

Thus, if you want to know the level of police protection in Cleveland, for example, you need to determine the number of full-time sworn officers currently employed.

Civilization

Civilization is the process of replacing sworn officers with nonsworn personnel for certain positions. Today about 33 percent of all local police department employees are civilians. This represents an increase from 11.1 percent in 1960 and 18.4 percent in 1980. Nonsworn personnel have been increasingly used as dispatchers, research and planning specialists, crime-data analysts, and computer technicians.14

There are several reasons for utilizing civilians in police work. First, they free up sworn officers for critical police work that requires a trained and experienced officer. Second, they possess needed expertise in such areas as computers or data analysis. Third, in many cases they are less expensive than sworn officers, thereby representing a cost saving.15 For these reasons, a number of experts use the proportion of civilian employees within a police agency as an indicator of departmental professionalism.16

The police–population ratio

The standard measure for the level of police protection in a community is the police–population ratio. This is usually expressed as the number of sworn officers per thousand residents. The national average for local agencies is 2.5 sworn officers per thousand. The ratio for large cities with populations of 250,000 or more is 2.5. Small cities (population 50,000 to 99,999) have the lowest ratio (1.8 per thousand).17

There is tremendous variation in the police–population ratios among big cities. Washington DC has a ratio of 6.3 per thousand residents, compared with 4.4 in Detroit and 1.6 in San Diego.18 There is no clear relationship between the police–population ratio and the crime rate. In many respects, instead of higher levels of police protection producing lower crime rates, higher crime rates lead to the employment of more police.19 The relationship of the police–population ratio to the crime rate is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

The Cost of Police Protection

Law enforcement is an extremely expensive enterprise. Each year local government agencies spend a total of $57.5 billion on police services. This represents about
30 percent of all criminal justice system expenditures. These figures do not, however, include the cost of private security. The cost of police protection increased about 545 percent between 1977 and 2003. Expenditures for corrections increased more than twice as fast (1,173 percent) in the same period, mainly as a result of the soaring prison populations. 20

Law enforcement is a labor-intensive industry. Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits, consume about 85 to 90 percent of an agency’s budget. For this reason, the efficiency of a police department depends heavily on how well it manages its personnel and what percentage of officers it places in patrol and investigative units (see Chapter 7).

The Fragmentation Issue

In 1967 the President’s Crime Commission concluded that “a fundamental problem confronting law enforcement today is that of fragmented crime repression efforts resulting from the large number of uncoordinated local governments and law enforcement agencies.” 21

The commission published a map of the Detroit metropolitan area indicating the eighty-five agencies in the area. As Exhibit 3–4 indicates, almost half of these agencies had twenty or fewer officers.

The major problem, according to the critics, is a lack of coordination between agencies in the same geographic area. Criminals do not respect political boundaries. In a large metropolitan area, a burglar may commit crimes in several different communities, each with its own police force. Auto-theft rings are often multistate operations. Detectives in one police department may have information that would help solve a series of crimes in a neighboring jurisdiction. In many instances, however, agencies compete rather than cooperate with one another.

Second, fragmentation of responsibility can also lead to crime displacement, especially with respect to vice crimes. One community may adopt a policy of strict enforcement of laws against gambling or prostitution. This often has the effect of driving vice activities to a neighboring jurisdiction, where different community standards exist.

Third, many experts believe there is a serious problem of duplication of services, with the resulting increase in costs. A city police department and the local

SIDEBAR 3 – 2

Exercise: Studying the Fragmentation Problem in Your Area

1. Prepare a map and accompanying table indicating the number of law enforcement agencies in your metropolitan area, the names of these agencies, and the number of sworn officers in each.

2. Research the nature of any contract or collaborative arrangements between these agencies (e.g., shared communications systems, jail services).
EXHIBIT 3–4

Detroit Metropolitan Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of officers</th>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 – 150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>△</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 – 200</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 – 5000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sheriff’s department may both operate their own 911 telephone systems and their own training academies. Several agencies in the same area may operate their own crime laboratories.

Fourth, fragmentation leads to inconsistent standards. Law enforcement agencies in the same area may have very different recruitment standards, training programs, and salary scales. In countries with a single national police force, uniform standards are established at the national level. In England, which has a tradition of local control of the police, minimum national standards are achieved through a process of inspection and financial incentives. The Home Office inspects each of the forty-three local police constabularies annually.
Alternatives to Fragmentation

The fragmentation problem is not easily solved. The independence of local governments is deeply rooted in American history. The principle of local control, not just of police but of schools and other government services, is deeply rooted in American political culture. There has always been a very strong fear of a national police force and suspicion of federal control of schools and police.

The major remedies for fragmentation include the following:

**Consolidation**

Some experts argue that small agencies should be consolidated into larger ones. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended the consolidation of all agencies with ten or fewer sworn officers (or more than half of the current total). In a few urban areas, the city police and the sheriff’s department have been merged. The Charlotte, North Carolina, and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Departments, for example, were merged in the early 1990s. Some cities, meanwhile, have combined police and fire departments into a single agency.

Consolidation of police and sheriff’s departments has made little progress, however. Both are large bureaucracies that do not want to give up their autonomy. Also, there are practical problems related to merging different entrance requirements, salary schedules, and pension systems.

**Contracting**

A second alternative to fragmentation is for small agencies to contract with larger agencies for specific services. About half of all cities and counties contract with other governmental units for various services. These contracts cover everything from sewage disposal to tax assessment and water supply. The most common criminal justice services include jails and detention facilities and police–fire communications systems. In many cases, the county sheriff maintains the 911 service for small towns in the area. In other cases, small towns contract with the sheriff for all police services. The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, for example, contracts with forty-one separate towns. These contracts account for over $400 million in revenue each year.

**The Fragmentation Problem Reconsidered**

Some experts believe the fragmentation problem may not be as serious as others have argued. The Police Services Study (PSS) undertook the first systematic research on the issue in the 1970s, examining the activities of 1,827 law enforcement agencies in 80 medium-sized metropolitan areas. Contrary to the traditional image of fragmentation, the study found that “informal interagency assistance is common,” and “strict duplication of services is almost nonexistent in the production of direct police services.”

With respect to patrol, for example, informal arrangements involving coordination, sharing, or alternating responsibility were common. No areas were left completely unpatrolled; nor were areas being patrolled by two or more agencies. With
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With respect to auxiliary services, small police departments routinely had access to crime laboratories, training academies, communications systems, and other services provided by larger agencies.

Even more important, the PSS concluded that small police departments were not necessarily less efficient than large departments. Small departments put a higher percentage of their officers on the street, performing direct police services. Larger departments did not necessarily achieve any advantages of scale.28 Larger agencies had more complex bureaucratic structures, with the result that a smaller percentage of officers were available for direct police services. Gary Cordner found that among Maryland agencies, the complexity of the community social structure, not the size of the agency, was most important in determining the effectiveness of criminal investigation: The less complex the community, the more effective the police.29

Finally, the emphasis on decentralized policing under community policing suggests that small local law enforcement agencies might be preferable to large consolidated agencies.30

Municipal Police

Municipal or city police are the most important component of American law enforcement. In 2004 they represented 71 percent of all law enforcement agencies and employed 61 percent of all sworn officers.31

SIDEBAR 3 – 3

U.S. Police Protection Level Compared to Those of Other Countries

Researchers have just begun to compare the level of police protection in the United States to those of other countries. Below is a table of countries and the number of police officers per thousand residents. As a group, identify three reasons why the level of police in the United States is higher than in some countries but lower than in others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even more important, municipal police play a more complex role than any other type of law enforcement agency. The external environment heavily influences all agencies. Cities, and big cities in particular, represent the most complex environments, particularly in terms of the diversity of the population. City police departments have the heaviest responsibility for dealing with serious crime, which is disproportionately concentrated in cities. They are also responsible for difficult order maintenance problems and are asked to provide a wide range of emergency services.

Among all municipal police departments, a few very large departments play a disproportionately important role. A Police Foundation report on the big six police departments—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Detroit—found that they are responsible for 7.5 percent of the U.S. population but face 23 percent of all violent crime, including 34 percent of all robberies. Although these six represent a tiny fraction of all departments, they employ almost 13 percent of all sworn officers. The New York City police department towers over all others, with 35,973 sworn officers. Chicago is second with about 13,000 officers.

The big departments dominate public thinking about the police. Events in New York or Los Angeles—the Rodney King case, for example—are reported by the national news media. Moreover, a disproportionate amount of the research on policing has been conducted in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington. Much less is known about medium-sized police departments, and almost no research has been done on small departments, even though they are more representative of policing in America.

The typical municipal police department is in a small town. Slightly more than half (50.4 percent) employ fewer than ten sworn officers. Small town and rural police operate in a very different context than big-city police. There is less serious crime than in urban areas. The majority of calls for police service involve noncriminal events and minor disturbances. In one study, traffic problems accounted for 25 percent of all calls, public disturbances accounted for 19 percent, family disturbances represented 18 percent, and stray dogs another 11 percent. (The remaining 27 percent were miscellaneous calls.)

**County Police**

A few areas are served by county police departments. They are essentially municipal police that operate on a countywide basis, but do not have any of the non-law-enforcement roles of the county sheriff (see Exhibit 3–5). Less than 1 percent of all local departments are county police. The largest are Suffolk County police (2,692 sworn officers) and New York State’s Nassau County police (2,574 sworn officers).

**The County Sheriff**

There are 3,067 sheriff’s departments in the United States. The county sheriff’s office is unique among American law enforcement agencies, in terms of both its legal status and its role.
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The legal status of the sheriff is unique because in thirty-seven states it is a constitutional office, whose responsibilities are defined in the state constitution. Also, sheriffs are elected in all but two states. (In Rhode Island they are appointed by the governor; in Hawaii they are appointed by the chief justice of the state supreme court.) As elected officials, sheriffs are directly involved in partisan politics in ways that municipal police chiefs are not. Historically, in rural areas the sheriff was the most powerful politician in the county.  

The Role of the Sheriff

Sheriffs have a unique role in that they serve all three components of the criminal justice system: law enforcement, courts, and corrections. As Exhibit 3–5 indicates, almost all sheriff’s departments perform the basic law enforcement functions of patrolling and investigating crimes. Almost all serve the courts by process serving (subpoenas, etc.) and providing security for the courts. In many urban areas, sheriffs spend more time on civil court duties than on criminal law enforcement. Furthermore, 76 percent of all sheriff’s departments maintain the county jail. In most big cities the jail is operated by a separate department of corrections.

Lee Brown identified four different models of sheriff’s departments, according to their responsibilities: (1) full-service model sheriff’s departments carry out law enforcement, judicial, and correctional duties; (2) law enforcement model agencies carry out only law enforcement duties, with other responsibilities assumed by separate agencies; (3) civil-judicial model agencies handle only court-related duties (e.g., counties in Connecticut and Rhode Island); and (4) correctional-judicial model agencies (e.g., San Francisco County) handle all responsibilities except law enforcement.

The distribution of sheriff’s departments resembles that of the municipal police. There are a few very large departments and many small ones. The largest is the Los Angeles County sheriff’s department, which had 8,622 sworn officers in 2004. About 24 percent of all sheriff’s departments, however, have fewer than 10 sworn officers.
Other Local Agencies

The American law enforcement picture is complicated by the existence of other local agencies that have some law enforcement responsibilities.

The Constable

Like the sheriff, the constable is an office whose roots can be traced back to colonial America. Urbanization and the consequent growth of city departments have stripped the constable’s office of most of its functions. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations found it to be “of minor importance” and recommended its abolition.  

There are few constables left in the United States today. Depending on the state, constables can be elected or appointed, and their role and function is defined by state constitution. Modern constables typically work within the county court system. They are responsible for serving warrants and subpoenas, transporting prisoners, and providing security for district judges. They also work with county commissioners to post delinquent tax notices and assist attorneys in serving divorce papers.

The Coroner/Medical Examiner

The office of the coroner, or medical examiner, is often considered a law enforcement agency because it has the responsibility to investigate crimes. Medical examiners and coroners’ offices are responsible for a wide range of activities including investigating death scenes, conducting autopsies, and determining the cause of violent or unexpected deaths. A Bureau of Justice Statistics special report found a total of 1,998 coroners or medical examiners in the United States.

Coroners and medical examiners are usually employed by a state, county, or city agency. The type of “death investigator” used by a jurisdiction is typically mandated by law. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that “16 states had a centralized statewide medical examiner system, 14 states had a county coroner system, 7 had a county medical examiner system, and 13 had a mixed county medical examiner and coroner system.”

There are a number of important distinctions between coroners and medical examiners. First, coroners are typically not trained as physicians and have received little, if any, medical training; whereas medical examiners are physicians and often have received special training in death investigation. Second, coroners are typically elected to their position; medical examiners are usually appointed by an elected official. Third, while both are responsible for the investigation of deaths, medical examiners are expected to rely heavily on their medical expertise to understand the cause of death.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that about 20 percent of deaths in the United States are investigated by a coroner or medical examiner. While guidelines vary on which deaths are required to be investigated, most jurisdictions require that the following types of deaths be investigated:

- Deaths due to homicide, suicide, or accidental causes such as car crashes, falls, burns, or the ingestion of drugs.
- Sudden or suspicious deaths, deaths from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and unattended deaths.
• Deaths caused by an agent or disease constituting a threat to public health.
• Deaths that occur at a workplace.
• Deaths of people who were in custody, confinement, or who were institutionalized.
• Deaths of people to be cremated.  

Special District Police

Special district police agencies serve particular government agencies. The Los Angeles School District, for example, has its own police force. Some urban transit systems maintain separate law enforcement agencies. The Metropolitan Transit Police Force in the Washington DC subway system overlaps three different political jurisdictions: the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland.  

College and university campus police are an important example of special district police. About three-fourths of the campus security forces at colleges and universities with 2,500 or more students are state certified law enforcement agencies. Their officers have general arrest powers, often carry firearms, are certified by the state, and participate in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system. Today, the nation’s 750 law enforcement agencies that serve universities employ about 13,000 sworn officers. The other colleges and universities use private security or their own nonsworn security officers.  

Tribal Police

A unique aspect of American criminal justice is that many Native American tribes maintain their own separate criminal justice systems, including tribal police departments, on their reservations. Native American tribes are separate nations, which

SIDEBAR 3 – 4

Getting to Know Your Campus Police

1. Is your campus police agency a certified law enforcement agency?
2. If so, what state-mandated training do they receive? How many hours of training? What is the content of the curriculum? Who provides the training?
3. If it is not, what are the recruitment standards? What kind of training do officers receive? Who provides the training?
4. If your campus police agency is a certified law enforcement agency, does it file the required UCR report?
5. If not, does it file an annual crime report anyway?
6. Are your campus police officers armed? What kind of training in firearms use do they receive? What kind of retraining or recertification are the officers required to receive?
7. Does your campus police agency have a written deadly force policy? What does that policy say? (See Chapter 14 on deadly force policies.)
signed treaties with the United States government and retain a significant degree of legal autonomy. In a number of important respects, tribes and reservations are not subject to federal or state law (see Exhibit 3–6).

While there are roughly 330 Indian reservations in the United States, there are about 200 police agencies whose primary responsibility is to provide police services in Indian Country. This is largely because the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) provides police services to more than one reservation and many tribes are not entitled to their own police department. Historically, policing Indian Country has been the responsibility of the BIA. The BIA is located in the U.S. Department of the Interior. Today, however, there are a number of different administrative arrangements that are used to police Indian nations.

The most common administrative arrangement is for the tribe’s police agency to be created under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. This act, also known as Public Law 93-638, gives Indian nations the right to establish their own organizational framework and to establish their own performance standards for their police department. While officers and civilians in these agencies are considered tribal employees, they are typically funded with federal monies. The majority of Indian police departments are configured in this way.

The second most common administrative arrangement in Indian Country is for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to assume policing responsibilities. About 64 Indian nations still rely on the BIA for policing. Under this model all staff are federal employees and work under the authority of the BIA. Many Indian nations that are policed by the BIA are assigned a local BIA superintendent who assumes many of the responsibilities granted to chiefs of police in municipal police departments. BIA superintendents of small tribes are often administratively responsible for more than one tribe. There are about 37 police agencies operated by the BIA.

A less popular administrative arrangement is self-governance. Under this model, Indian nations contract with the BIA for policing services. Because the BIA is paid through block grants, the Indian nation is afforded a higher degree of organizational freedom. The least used administrative arrangement is the Tribally Funded

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**EXHIBIT 3–6**

Types of Indian Police Departments and Their Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Law Enforcement Program</th>
<th>Public Law 93-638</th>
<th>BIA</th>
<th>Self-Governance</th>
<th>Tribal Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administered by</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Federal government</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers are employees of</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Federal government</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Federal (often with tribal contribution)</td>
<td>Federal government</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Indian Police Department. While this model affords Indian nation’s complete control over their police services, most Indian nations do not have the financial resources for such an agency.  

Most tribally operated police agencies are small. Only seven tribal police agencies have fifty or more full-time sworn officers, and about one-third have fewer than five officers. These agencies are also typically responsible for policing relatively small populations that are dispersed over large land areas, making officers’ jobs difficult to manage.

State Law Enforcement Agencies

State law enforcement agencies fall into three categories: state police, highway patrols, and state investigative agencies. This book will focus on the first two, since they are regarded as general service law enforcement agencies.

State police are defined as agencies “having statewide police powers for both traffic regulation and criminal investigations.” Highway patrol are defined as agencies having “statewide authority to enforce traffic regulations and arrest non-traffic violators under their jurisdiction.”

There are forty-nine general service state law enforcement agencies in the United States; Hawaii is the only state without one. These agencies are divided about equally between state police and highway patrol. Several states have more than one law enforcement agency. California, for example, maintains both the California Highway Patrol and the California Division of Law Enforcement; in Ohio there is both the Ohio Highway Patrol and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. The roles and missions of state law enforcement agencies are defined by state law, and hence vary widely from state to state.

There is considerable variation in the administrative structure of state law enforcement agencies. One report found that “almost every possibility” exists. Several states have an umbrella agency containing a number of different departments responsible for various services. The New Jersey Department of Public Safety includes eight divisions: Division of Law, State Police, Division of Motor Vehicles, Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, Division of Criminal Justice, Division of Consumer Affairs, Police Training Commission, and State Athletic Commissioner.

Roles and Responsibilities

State police and highway patrol provide a variety of law enforcement services. In terms of patrol, state police have concurrent or shared responsibility with local police agencies. In about half of the states, the state police or highway patrol agency has the primary responsibility for enforcing traffic laws on the main highways.

State laws vary regarding responsibility for criminal investigation. In some states, the state police have general responsibility; in others, the investigative powers are limited. About half of all state agencies provide crime lab services (ballistics, drug testing) for local police departments. Finally, 77.6 percent of state police agencies operate a training academy. In some states, they are responsible for training recruits from local police departments.
Federal Law Enforcement Agencies

The federal component of the law enforcement industry is relatively small but more complex than generally recognized. It is estimated that there are 105,000 full-time federal law enforcement employees. This figure includes all personnel “authorized to carry firearms and make arrests.” It does not include military police, however.  

There is no agreement about the exact size of federal law enforcement activities. The confusion is due to the fact that many federal agencies have enforcement or regulatory powers. Most are not general service agencies, as defined above. They do not provide the basic services of protection and criminal investigation.  

Seventeen federal law enforcement agencies employ 500 or more sworn officers. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the largest with 27,705 full-time officers, followed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons with 15,214 officers, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation with 12,242 officers. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) employs 4,400 officers. The complexity and variety of federal law enforcement are indicated by the fact that the largest agencies include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (708 officers) and the U.S. Forest Service (600 officers).  

The role of each federal agency is specified by federal statute. In important respects, federal agencies have a far less complex role than that of municipal agencies. Federal agents do not have the ambiguous and difficult order maintenance responsibilities, do not maintain 911 emergency telephone services, and are not asked to handle vague “disturbance” calls.  

We discuss the role of the largest federal law enforcement agencies in the United States in the next section.

Federal Law Enforcement after September 11, 2001

After September 11, 2001, there was a substantial movement led by President George W. Bush to alter the organizational structure of federal law enforcement in the United States.  

He restructured federal law enforcement roles and responsibilities into two departments: the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice (see Exhibit 3–7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Homeland Security</th>
<th>Department of Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Customs and Border Protection</td>
<td>Drug Enforcement Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
<td>Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Security Administration</td>
<td>U.S. Marshals Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Coast Guard</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Secret Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3  The Contemporary Law Enforcement Industry

**The Department of Homeland Security**

On November 25, 2002, the Homeland Security Act was passed, creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), a new cabinet-level department that is responsible for activities pertaining to homeland security. This act launched the largest government reorganization since 1947. Twenty-two agencies, and about 170,000 employees, all with functions related to homeland security, were organizationally moved to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The six largest federal law enforcement employers with DHS are:

- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Secret Service

**Customs and Border Protection (CBP).** Many of the functions formerly carried out by the Customs Service, the INS Inspection Service, the Border Patrol, and the Agricultural Quarantine Inspection program were combined into the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The CBP is currently responsible for ensuring that persons and cargo enter the United States legally and safely through official ports of entry. It works to prevent illegal immigration and the smuggling of controlled substances, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and illegal and diseased plants and animals into the country.

**Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).** Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the Department of Homeland Security’s largest investigative bureau. It conducts many of the functions formerly carried out by the U.S. Customs Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Federal Protective Service. ICE is responsible for the enforcement of immigration and customs laws, the protection of many federal buildings, and air and marine enforcement. ICE is comprised of four divisions: (1) the Office of Investigations is responsible for investigating such issues as human smuggling, drugs, weapons, and other contraband; (2) the Office of Detention and Removal is responsible for deporting illegal immigrants; (3) the Office of Protective Services is responsible for policing over 8,800 federal buildings and facilities; and (4) the Office of Intelligence is responsible for collecting, maintaining, and disseminating strategic and tactical intelligence for the other three ICE divisions and for DHS.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was first established in 1979 and became part of DHS on March 1, 2003. It currently employs 2,600 full-time employees and has almost 4,000 standby personnel who are available for deployment after disasters if required. FEMA is responsible for preparing for, preventing, and responding to natural and man-made disasters. FEMA typically does not work alone, but coordinates and partners with government, private, and nonprofit organizations to manage emergency preparedness and response efforts.
Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was created on September 11, 2001, in direct response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. TSA is responsible for protecting the nation’s transportation system. While many people are aware of its responsibility for maintaining security at airports, it is also responsible for other transportation systems including roads, railways, seaports, bridges, and pipelines. The TSA is the largest employer within the Department of Homeland Security, employing more than 69,000 persons.

U.S. Coast Guard. The U.S. Coast Guard was originally established by Alexander Hamilton in 1790 as the Revenue Cutter Service, under the Department of Transportation. While the U.S. Coast Guard has been administratively housed in many government agencies over the years, it was transferred to the Department of Transportation in 1967, and moved to the Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003. The U.S. Coast Guard is a multifunctional, multimission service that has missions that are both security and nonsecurity related. For example, it is responsible for security missions such as port, waterway, and coastal security; drug interdiction; migrant interdiction; and defense readiness. It is also responsible for conducting nonsecurity missions such as maritime safety, search and rescue, protecting the environment and living marine resources, and ice operations. As such, the U.S. Coast Guard is unique in that it has been granted authority and responsibilities that are similar to both the military and the police.

U.S. Secret Service. The U.S. Secret Service was originally established in 1865 for the purpose of investigating the counterfeiting of U.S. currency. Today, it has a wide array of investigative responsibilities and is responsible for the protection of current and former U.S. presidents, vice presidents, and their immediate family members. Many of their investigative responsibilities were changed with the advent of more sophisticated forms of communication. The U.S. Secret Service is currently responsible for investigating “crimes that involve financial institution fraud, computer and telecommunication fraud, false identification documents, access device fraud, advance fee fraud, electronic funds transfer, and money laundering.”

The Department of Justice
In 1870, Congress established the Department of Justice with the attorney general as its administrative head. Congress made the Department of Justice responsible for enforcing and prosecuting all federal laws. While the structure of the Department of Justice has changed, its fundamental mission has remained the same. The five largest Department of Justice agencies are:

- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
- U.S. Marshals Service
- Federal Bureau of Prisons

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is to enforce federal laws and regulations pertaining to
controlled substances. The primary focus of its law enforcement efforts is on those individuals and organizations who grow, manufacture, and distribute illegal drugs. Therefore, its mission is primarily dedicated to reducing the supply of illegal drugs to residents in the United States. For example, DEA agents investigate individuals involved in high-level drug trafficking within the United States and investigate individuals who traffic major amounts of illegal drugs into the United States. They also work with local police agencies to reduce the availability of illegal drugs at the street level and work with foreign governments to eradicate crops associated with illegal drugs. The DEA is staffed with about 5,300 special agents who are supported by 5,600 staff.

**Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).** The role of the FBI has historically been shaped by administrative and political factors. Under J. Edgar Hoover (1924–1972), the FBI concentrated its efforts on investigating alleged “subversives” and apprehending bank robbers and stolen cars. Critics charged that the FBI ignored white-collar crime, organized crime, and violations of the civil rights of minorities. After Hoover’s death it was discovered that, under his direction, the FBI had committed many violations of citizens’ rights: it was guilty of spying on individuals and groups because of their political beliefs, conducting illegal wiretaps, and even burglarizing the offices of groups it was spying on. However, since Hoover’s death, subsequent FBI directors reoriented the Bureau’s mission, placing more emphasis on white-collar crime, organized crime, and political corruption.

In 2002, after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the FBI announced that it was going to make a fundamental change in its mission, which would focus first on preventing future terrorist attacks. In particular, the FBI crafted a new mandate that focused on ten priorities.

1. Protect the United States from terrorist attack.
2. Protect the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage.
3. Protect the United States against cyber-based attacks and high technology crimes.
4. Combat public corruption at all levels.
5. Protect civil rights.
6. Combat transnational and national criminal organizations and enterprises.
7. Combat major white-collar crime.
8. Combat significant violent crime.
9. Support federal, state, local, and international partners.
10. Upgrade technology to successfully perform the FBI’s mission.

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).** In 2003, under the Homeland Security Act, the law enforcement functions of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) were transferred from the U.S. Treasury Department to the Department of Justice. First, ATF is responsible for enforcing federal firearms laws. It investigates firearms trafficking and identifies and arrests armed career criminals. Second, it is responsible for regulating the explosives-related
industry to prevent terrorists and criminals from coming into possession of explosives and to ensure that those in possession of explosives are properly licensed. It also provides training to federal, state, and local officials for the detection, handling, and destruction of explosives. Last, ATF is responsible for enforcing federal laws as they pertain to the collection of federal taxes on alcohol and tobacco products.\[82\]

**U.S. Marshals Service.** The U.S. Marshals Service, established in 1789, is the nation’s oldest federal law enforcement agency. The U.S. Marshals Service is responsible for providing security to the federal courts, housing federal detainees, and conducting fugitive investigations. Each year U.S. marshals arrest more than 35,000 persons wanted by federal law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, DEA, and ATF, and house over 54,000 detainees through cooperative agreements.
with local, state, and private jails. The U.S. Marshals Service is also responsible for administering the nation’s witness protection program. Since 1971 it has provided new identities and relocated 7,800 witnesses and about 10,000 of their family members.\textsuperscript{83}

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**The Private Security Industry**

Private security is an important part of American law enforcement. Its exact size is difficult to determine because it involves many small, private agencies, part-time employees, and security personnel that are employed by private businesses. It is estimated that there are as many as 90,000 private security organizations that employ over 2 million people.\textsuperscript{84} Elizabeth Joh reports that this amounts to roughly three private security officers for every one public police officer in America. She further points to the fact that it is estimated the United States spends twice as much money on private policing as it does on public policing.\textsuperscript{85} The above estimates include the following categories of jobs: private detectives and investigators, patrol services, security guards, loss prevention specialists, gaming officers and investigators, and armored car services. Brian Forst points out that Sears, Roebuck employs about 6,000 security guards, which is significantly more personnel than almost any metropolitan police department.\textsuperscript{86}

Today private security firms are responsible for patrolling and providing protection at public and private housing complexes, gated communities, business parks, malls, office complexes, power plants, and airports.\textsuperscript{87} They have also begun to play a major role in traffic regulation through the operation of cameras that detect red-light running and automated radar stations for administering speeding tickets. One news story providing an example of the extent of private security in American life made the following statement: “There are certain areas in Florida—home of Wackenhut HQ—where your housing estate is policed by Wackenhut, you get on the train to go to work and that’s policed by Wackenhut, and you get to work and the corporate office is policed by Wackenhut. And if you do something wrong, you end up in a Wackenhut prison.”\textsuperscript{88}

Private police organizations display four characteristics that differentiate themselves from the public police. First, private police organizations focus on more than crime. They also concern themselves with broader issues such as property, personal assets, and general consumer satisfaction. Second, private police organizations have many more alternatives at their disposal for addressing problems. For example, they can have employees fired, ban persons from establishments, fine those who do not follow policies and guidelines, as well as pursue prosecution in the criminal courts. As such, private police have much more discretion in how they resolve problems. Third, private police organizations place significantly more emphasis on the prevention of problems. Public police organizations have traditionally emphasized reacting to problems after they occur, whereas private police invest more of their resources in the prevention of problems before they occur. Fourth, private police primarily concern themselves with matters occurring on, or with, private property. For instance, private police are typically associated with large privately held spaces such as malls, housing developments, and business complexes.\textsuperscript{89}
The size of the private security industry raises a number of important issues. The first is the quality of private security personnel. Requirements for employment are minimal, and in many cases, training is nonexistent. States each have their own laws regarding minimum training qualifications for being a private security officer (see Exhibit 3–8). In 2004 thirteen states required security personnel to undergo eight or more hours of training; however, twenty-nine states did not require any training at all. By 2006 the latter number had risen to thirty-one. Similarly, in 2006 twenty-one states did not require private security officers to be licensed, and sixteen states did not require a criminal background check. The result is that in many states private security is often the last resort for people unable to find other jobs.

Second, there are few federal, state, or local laws that guide private police conduct. The courts have repeatedly articulated that the laws that guide the behavior of public police officers are not applicable to private security. For example, the Supreme Court has ruled that decisions such as Miranda and Mapp only apply to public police, and private security officers are not bound by these decisions. Likewise, few states have sought to enact legislation to guide private security conduct and instead have chosen to hold private security officers accountable in the same way as they do private citizens.

Third, there are problems related to cooperation between public and private police. In large part this appears to be a consequence of the attitudes and beliefs held by each group about the other. Research indicates that private police officers believe

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**EXHIBIT 3–8**

*Hours of Security Guard Training Required, by State*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State(s)</th>
<th>Hours of Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA, FL, OK</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>NY</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>MN, OR</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>AZ, CT, GA, UT</td>
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<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC, NV, SC, TN, WA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Other States</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that public police officers do not respect them, are more concerned with making arrests and less concerned about crime prevention, and are generally unwilling to share information with them. Similar studies examining public police reveal that they perceive private police to be unprofessional, too client-oriented, and often unwilling to prosecute.  

This last problem has become particularly pronounced since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The 9/11 commission noted that 85 percent of the nation’s critical infrastructures are protected by private security organizations and roughly 5 percent of all private police are responsible for guarding and protecting a critical infrastructure or asset. For example, private police are responsible for protecting nuclear power plants, major financial institutions, chemical facilities, and water plants. Advisers to Congress have begun to publicly question the wisdom of placing the nation’s most valuable assets in the hands of those who are so poorly trained and who earn less than half the average salary of the police.

Minimum Standards: American Style

Unlike most other countries, the United States does not have a national police system. There is no federal agency responsible for supervising local agencies or ensuring minimum standards. In England each local department receives half of its budget from the national government and undergoes a regular inspection as part of the process. Nonetheless, there are some minimum standards for law enforcement agencies in the United States that are required by federal and state governments. The process for developing and enforcing these standards, however, is not systematic.

The Role of the Federal Government

The most important set of national standards are the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court related to police procedures. Decisions such as *Mapp v. Ohio*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, and *Tennessee v. Garner* set minimum national standards based on provisions of the U.S. Constitution. Beginning in the 1960s, these and other Supreme Court decisions were a major instrument of reform, forcing departments to significantly improve personnel standards and management and supervision.

Relying on the Supreme Court to define minimum standards for police has serious limitations, however. First, most aspects of policing do not raise issues of constitutional law—for example, the length of police academy training or the content of that training. Second, enforcing Supreme Court decisions is extremely difficult. A police department may systematically violate the *Miranda* requirement; it is enforced only when someone is convicted and then appeals that conviction on the basis of the *Miranda* decision.

Congress has passed a number of laws that directly apply to state and local law enforcement agencies. Most important is the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or sex. Local and state agencies are forbidden to discriminate in recruitment, promotion, or assignment of officers. The law, however, does not cover many police personnel issues. It does not, for example, establish minimum standards for recruitment or training. No federal law specifies a minimum level of education for police recruits.
Nor does any law require a minimum police–population ratio or set standards for patrol operations.

The U.S. Department of Justice also uses grants to encourage changes in policing. For example, the 1994 Violent Crime Control Act provided funds for 100,000 officers. The program was administered through the Office of Community-Oriented Police Services (COPS), and money was granted only if the local agency developed a plan for implementing community policing.  

The Role of State Governments

State governments also set minimum standards for police in a number of areas. State supreme courts rule on issues under their state constitutions. State codes of criminal procedure also define what police must do and what they may not do.

The most important role of state governments has been to require the licensing or certification of all sworn officers. In particular, this includes mandatory preservice training. New York and California were pioneers in this area in 1959, and by the 1970s every state had some kind of certification requirement. Prior to this time, it was not uncommon in small departments for officers to have no preservice training whatsoever.  

In a further development of this approach, some states have adopted procedures for delicensing or decertifying police officers. In Florida, for example, when an officer’s license is revoked by the state, that person is not eligible to be employed by any other law enforcement agency in the state. In most states, however, it is possible for an officer to be fired by one police department and then hired by another.

Accreditation

A final approach to establishing minimum national standards in policing is through accreditation. Accreditation is a process of professional self-regulation, similar to those processes that exist in medicine, law, education, and other occupations. The Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) was established in 1979. The fourth edition of its Standards for Law Enforcement includes separate standards. Some standards are mandatory, while others are only recommended.

The major weakness with accreditation is that it is a voluntary process. There is no penalty for a police department not being accredited. By comparison, a nonaccredited educational institution is not eligible for certain federal funds, and graduates from nonaccredited institutions find that their credits are not accepted by other schools.  

The process of becoming accredited is expensive, in terms of both the formal CALEA fees and the staff time required to meet the various standards. However, by 2008 CALEA had accredited 746 agencies.

Critics question the impact of accreditation on police work. Mastrofski suggests that accreditation standards “add[s] to the proliferation of rules in already rules-suffused bureaucracies, without appreciably affecting patterns of police behavior.” Others, however, have found that accreditation has a positive impact on police organizations. For example, McCabe and Fajardo reported that accredited agencies, when
compared to nonaccredited agencies, are more likely to require more training, have higher minimum educational requirements for new officers, and are twice as likely to require drug testing for sworn officers. Agencies that are accredited were also found to be more likely to have specialized units to respond to child abuse and to enforce drug laws.108

In short, American law enforcement agencies must meet some minimum standards. These standards cover only a limited range of issues, and there is no system for developing and implementing a comprehensive set of standards.

**Case Study**

**Interagency Coordination: A Case Study of the 2005 London Train Bombings**

On July 7, 2005, at approximately 8:50 a.m., a series of bombs exploded on three London Underground trains. One hour later, a fourth bomb exploded on the upper deck of a bus in Tavistock Square. The attacks—the work of four suicide bombers—marked the deadliest bombings in London since World War II and the first suicide attacks in modern Western Europe.

The response of London’s emergency services and transportation system to the bombings is considered the city’s most comprehensive and complex response ever to a terrorist attack. [1] Responding agencies faced challenges during and immediately after the attacks, but major problems in emergency coordination were minimized because London officials had established relationships with one another and had practiced agreed-upon procedures. Consequently, everyone knew their roles and responsibilities; a command and control system was up and running quickly; and mutual aid agreements—planned out in advance—were successfully initiated and applied.

This case study is based on research regarding the multiagency response to the London attacks, including barriers and ways to overcome them. As part of that National Institute of Justice-funded study, Stro and Eyerman interviewed officials from law enforcement, fire and medical services, and public health agencies who were directly involved in the July 2005 London response. [2] The authors asked about their role during the response, the strategies for coordination that facilitated it, the barriers they encountered, and possible strategies for improving coordination among agencies responding to emergencies.

**Why Do Emergency Coordination Efforts Fail?**

Like the U.K., the United States faces a range of potential threats that would require a quick and coordinated response by many agencies. Our nation’s capacity to prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other large-scale emergencies—especially ones involving simultaneous attacks at different locations—hinges on the ability of agencies to communicate with one another, share resources, and coordinate and execute a joint effort.
Researchers who study coordinated emergency response have identified both barriers and promising practices to help law enforcement and public health agencies improve interagency support during such situations. First and foremost, we know that multiagency coordination is a challenge at all levels. Even small problems can be exacerbated when crises occur in several places simultaneously or when reports by the media heighten public panic. Overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities in emergency response can compound budget concerns, interagency friction, and miscommunication.

In their research, they found four general barriers to interagency coordination:

- **Communication.** Agencies tend to develop their own jargon based on their areas of focus and internal workings. The subsequent lack of a common language often impedes cross-agency communication.

- **Leadership.** Coordinated planning and response require an ongoing commitment from agency leaders. Response can fail when a leader of a critical partner agency is unwilling to commit qualified staff and resources because he or she is unconvinced of the benefits to the agency.

- **Cultural differences.** Although public safety and health officials share the common goal of saving lives, each agency develops its own cultural standards of behavior that reflect the educational and social backgrounds of its staff, organizational hierarchy, leadership style, and core mission.

- **Legal and structural differences.** Each agency has a unique internal hierarchy, different processes for working through the chain of command, legal limitations, and varying geographical and topical jurisdictions. These differences can discourage, delay, or prohibit joint planning initiatives.

To identify promising practices that can be used to resolve coordination barriers in the United States and elsewhere, the authors examined London’s response in relation to a general coordination model. Applying this model—just one coordination model among many—to the 2005 bombings response provides an interesting look at some of the following interagency coordination promising practices.

**The London Bombings: Declaring a ‘Major’ Incident**


The manual defines “major incident” broadly so that any emergency response agency can declare a major incident and thus increase the likelihood that multiple agencies will respond immediately. A key facet of the London bombing response was, in fact, rapid recognition and declaration of a major incident.

**London’s Standardized Command Structure**

LESLP’s manual also describes the responsibilities of each agency during any major incident and defines the general roles that relevant personnel perform on the scene. The
roles are defined by three levels of leadership: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. [4] The three levels of command are used across the U.K. for all large-scale emergencies. Consequently, relevant agencies are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of each level.

In addition, all agencies have agreed that the U.K.’s law enforcement serves as the coordination lead. Thus, there is no confusion about which agency is in charge during a major incident. Because these procedures were already in place at the time of the 2005 bombings, there was limited confusion about the roles and responsibilities of responding agencies.

Joint Training and Planning
The anti-terrorism branch of the London Metropolitan Police Service hosts quarterly joint exercises, known as the Hanover Series, to practice what to do in the event of a major incident. Partner agencies and other stakeholders meet in the outskirts of London for weekend tabletop exercises that increase everyone’s knowledge of roles and responsibilities. According to emergency service personnel, the practice sessions also increase familiarity with other key personnel, provide the opportunity to test procedures and rehearse the standardized LESLP command and control system, and help agencies learn how to respond and react collectively.

The exercises use the Silver and Gold components of LESLP’s command and control structure and therefore help reinforce and improve multiagency coordination. Perhaps most importantly, the scenarios introduced during the Hanover Series are grounded in practical, wide-ranging incidents that require in-depth planning and response duties. These exercises usually reflect local, national and international events and address a series of issues to improve multiagency cooperation.

One Voice, One Message
Having a single media spokesperson can help ensure that consistent information is released to the public in a timely manner. It can also help avoid conflicting and confusing statements from different agencies. Shortly after the 2005 bombings, the Metropolitan Police Service assumed the lead position of a joint media “cell” and convened a group of public information officials from partnering agencies and the central government. The group met quickly after the bombings to agree upon roles and responsibilities and to develop a joint message. It provided the public—via the media—with a constant stream of information that helped to restore calm and ultimately to identify the bombers.

Developing a National Coordination Model
Since 2001, there has been an increased emphasis on multiagency planning and response, and efforts have been taken in the United States and elsewhere to develop coordinated approaches. In public safety and homeland security, informal agreements between agencies can serve as a first step toward minimizing barriers to coordination. Informal agreements can allow agency leaders to achieve their goals through cooperation rather than direct competition and can help clarify each agency’s expectations. After working relationships have been established, agencies may then decide to develop more formal agreements that describe the planning, collaboration and training elements discussed above.
The July 2005 bombings in London are just one example of a complex event that required extensive response planning and training. Other examples include public health outbreaks, serial violence like the D.C.-area sniper attacks and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. Identifying and developing a national coordination model—and learning from earlier cases—should greatly improve our nation’s abilities to respond to terrorist attack or other major homeland security events.

Notes


[2] The authors thank the London planning and response community for their candid and thoughtful participation in this study; this project would not have been possible without their support.


[4] These levels of command are often called “strategic,” “tactical” and “operational.” In London’s emergency command structure, these roles are not related to rank within or across agencies.


Summary

Law enforcement is an extremely complex activity in the United States. The delivery of police services is fragmented among thousands of city, county, state, special district, federal, and private security agencies. There are tremendous differences in the size, role, and activities of these different agencies. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to generalize about the police in America.

Key Terms

- local political control, 59
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- civilians, 63
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- county police, 68
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- constable, 70
- coroner, 70
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- accreditation, 82

For Discussion

1. Go to your campus law enforcement agency’s headquarters and request a copy of last year’s campus crime statistics. Ask the desk attendant how many full-time employees work for the agency. Ask how many are sworn officers and how many are nonsworn officers. As a class,
discuss whether you think there are too many or too few personnel working for your campus law enforcement agency in light of the campus’s reported crime problem.

2. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of civilianization?

3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of leaving the primary responsibility for police protection to local governments versus the federal or state government?

4. The military has rarely been used for local crime control. When, if ever, would the use of the military be acceptable to address local crime problems?

Internet Exercises

Exercise 1 Go to a Web site of an agency in your region and find out (a) the total number of employees who are authorized to work for the agency, (b) the total number of sworn officers authorized to work for the agency, and (c) the total number of employees who are currently employed by the agency.

Exercise 2 Go to the Web site www.calea.org. Examine the process that a police department must go through to become accredited by CALEA.

Exercise 3 Go to the Web sites of your police and sheriff’s departments and find out what services are duplicated by the two agencies.

Exercise 4 Go to the Web site www.OJP.USDOJ.gov/bjs. Look for law enforcement and administrative statistics online. Compare your local agency to others in your state.

Notes

4. Ostrom, Parks, and Whitaker, Patterns of Metropolitan Policing.
27. Ostrom, Parks, and Whitaker, *Patterns of Metropolitan Policing*.
36. Ibid.
41. Falcone and Wells, “The County Sheriff as a Distinctive Policing Modality.”
49. Ibid, pg. 1.


57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.


60. Wakeling, Jorgensen, Michaelson, and Begay, Policing on American Indian Reservations.


63. Ibid., p. 12.


65. Ibid.


67. Ibid.


88. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Terrill, World Criminal Justice Systems, pp. 9–25.