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A LEMAS Report

Drug Enforcement by Police and Sheriffs' Departments, 1990

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In 1990, about 9,300 local police departments and 2,500 sheriffs' departments had primary responsibility for the enforcement of drug laws. Collectively, these agencies employed 466,000 full-time officers, 92% of all local police and sheriffs' officers nationwide. In addition, 34 State police departments, employing 43,000 officers, had primary drug enforcement responsibilities.

This report presents information collected from State and local law enforcement agencies with primary drug enforcement responsibilities. It includes information on types of illegal drugs seized, operation of special drug units, multiagency task force participation, and receipts from drug asset forfeiture programs.

For all agencies the report also summarizes how drug testing policies apply to arrestees, applicants for sworn positions, and employees.

Major findings include the following:

• Among agencies with primary drug enforcement responsibilities that served 50,000 or more residents, over 90% of the police departments and over 80% of the sheriffs' departments operated special drug enforcement units.

• Nationwide, more than 16,000 local police and sheriffs' officers, and over 2,000 State police officers were assigned full time to special drug units.

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Few issues are as important in law enforcement today as how governments at all levels respond to the challenge to rid our society of illicit drugs. This report is drawn from the second triennial survey conducted by the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics program. The survey included new questions about drugs seized, drug enforcement techniques, and testing of arrestees and employees. State and local law enforcement agencies have provided a national understanding of the innovations in the fight against drugs — special drug enforcement units, interagency task forces, and drug asset forfeiture programs. We salute the departments in their cooperation with LEMAS and trust that this profile will prove valuable in their assessments and planning.

Steven D. Dillingham, Ph.D.
Director

• Half of local police and sheriffs' departments with primary drug enforcement responsibilities were participating in a multiagency drug enforcement task force. These 6,500 agencies had assigned nearly 10,000 officers full time to such task forces.

• Among departments with primary drug enforcement responsibilities, over 90% of the police departments serving a population of 50,000 or more, and over 90% of the sheriffs' departments serving 250,000 or more residents, received money or goods from a drug asset forfeiture program.

• Among the State police departments with primary drug enforcement responsibilities, 85% operated a special drug unit, 91% participated in a multiagency drug enforcement task force, and 94% received money or goods from drug asset forfeitures.

• About 2 in 3 State police departments and 2 in 5 local police and sheriffs' departments reported that at least some of the persons they arrested were required to take a test for illegal drugs.

• A majority of State police departments and local police departments serving a population of 25,000 or more required that all applicants for sworn positions take a test for illegal drugs.

• About 3% of local law enforcement officers worked for agencies that had a mandatory drug testing program for regular field officers; 17% were employed by agencies that had a random selection testing program for officers.

• Nonprobationary officers could be dismissed after one positive test in about two-thirds of local police and sheriffs' departments and in about three-fourths of State police departments. Nearly all departments had a policy specifying dismissal for two positive drug tests.

• Treatment alternatives were a part of the drug testing policy for employees in about half of State and local police departments and two-fifths of sheriffs' departments. Such alternatives were generally limited to the first positive test results only.

The LEMAS survey

The 1990 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey questionnaire was mailed to all 780 State and local law enforcement agencies with 100 or more sworn officers and to a sample of 2,338 agencies with fewer than 100 officers. Of the 3,118 agencies receiving the LEMAS questionnaire, 2,945 (94.5%) responded. The survey used a sampling frame based on personnel data from the 1986 Directory Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies. (See *Methodology* for further discussion of sampling.)

The local police departments included in this report are general purpose agencies operated by municipal or county governments. The State police departments included in this report are the primary general purpose agencies in all States except Hawaii, which does not have a State police department.

This report presents only data collected on drug-related policies. The BJS Bulletins *State and Local Police Departments, 1990* (NCJ-133284) and *Sheriffs' Departments, 1990* (NCJ-133283) present other data collected in the LEMAS survey.

The first section of this report, on drug enforcement activities, includes only agencies with primary drug enforcement responsibilities. Agencies involved in drug enforcement only in a backup capacity, or those whose responsibilities are limited to traffic enforcement, jail operation, court operations or other such duties are not included. The second section, on drug testing policies, includes all local police, sheriffs', and State police departments.

Drug enforcement activities

State and local law enforcement agencies made an estimated 1.1 million arrests for drug law violations during 1990, according to the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) of the FBI. Excluding traffic violations, 1 in every 13 arrests made during the year was for a drug-related offense.

Local police and sheriffs' departments

During 1990, 77% of the Nation's local police and sheriffs' departments reported they had primary responsibility for the enforcement of drug laws in areas under their jurisdiction (table 1). These 11,800 agencies employed 466,000 full-time officers, 92% of all local officers nationwide.

Over 9,000 local police departments, employing 96% of all local police officers, reported they had primary drug enforcement responsibilities. Nearly all of the police departments in jurisdictions of 10,000 or more in population had such responsibilities. These 2,800 departments employed approximately 300,000 full-time officers. Departments in towns with a population of 2,500 to 9,999 (83%), or a population less than 2,500 (60%), were less likely to have primary drug enforcement responsibilities. These 6,500 departments in smaller communities employed about 46,000 officers.

About 2,500 (81%) of the sheriffs' departments nationwide reported having primary drug enforcement responsibilities in 1990. Sheriffs' departments located in jurisdictions with a population of under 100,000 were somewhat more likely to have drug enforcement responsibilities than those in larger jurisdictions (83% versus 65%); however, the departments serving a population of 100,000 or more employed more officers than those in smaller jurisdictions (77,000 versus 42,000).

Local police and sheriffs' departments with primary drug enforcement responsibilities seized numerous types of illegal drugs during the 12-month period ending on June 30, 1990 (table 2). Across all categories, departments in larger jurisdictions were more likely to have seized each type of drug than those in smaller jurisdictions.

Most of the police and sheriffs' departments serving a population of 50,000 or more seized nearly all of the types of drugs asked about in the survey. In the smallest jurisdictions, marijuana and cocaine were the only drugs seized by more than a third of all departments, and only marijuana was seized by more than half.

Eighty-six percent of local police departments and 94% of sheriffs' departments made seizures of marijuana—higher percentages than for any other drug. The percentage of departments making marijuana seizures was 94% or higher for departments in all population categories, except for sheriffs' departments serving a population of 10,000 or less (88%) and police departments serving a population of 2,500 or less (70%).

According to UCR data for 1990, 30% of all arrests for drug law violations were marijuana-related. About 4 in 5 marijuana arrests were for possession, and the remainder, for offenses related to trafficking

Table 1. Local police and sheriffs' departments with primary responsibility for drug enforcement, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	All agencies: Number of agencies	All agencies: Full-time sworn officers employed	Agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement: Agencies: Number	Agencies: Percent	Full-time sworn officers: Number	Full-time sworn officers: Percent
All local agencies	15,381	504,419	11,809	77%	466,138	92%
Police departments						
All sizes	12,288	363,001	9,316	76%	347,569	96%
1,000,000 or more	14	74,775	14	100	74,775	100
500,000-999,999	29	36,163	28	96	35,899	99
250,000-499,999	42	30,862	42	100	30,862	100
100,000-249,999	137	37,330	136	99	37,147	99
50,000-99,999	344	40,651	331	96	39,385	97
25,000-49,999	702	40,342	660	94	38,838	96
10,000-24,999	1,672	47,640	1,573	94	45,162	95
2,500-9,999	4,095	40,515	3,401	83	35,088	87
Under 2,500	5,253	14,722	3,132	60	10,614	72
Sheriffs' departments						
All sizes	3,093	141,418	2,493	81%	118,569	84%
1,000,000 or more	27	28,112	20	73	26,178	93
500,000-999,999	62	22,231	35	56	16,243	73
250,000-499,999	92	18,367	55	59	14,084	77
100,000-249,999	270	25,055	182	67	20,262	81
50,000-99,999	374	17,998	299	80	15,435	86
25,000-49,999	594	13,391	505	85	12,239	91
10,000-24,999	955	11,972	814	85	10,527	88
Under 10,000	719	4,292	583	81	3,623	84

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Cocaine was seized by 72% of local police and sheriffs' departments, the second highest total percentage for any drug type. All police departments serving a population of 100,000 or more, and over 90% of those serving 10,000 to 99,999 residents, reported making seizures of cocaine. Over 95% of the sheriffs' departments serving 50,000 or more residents reported making seizures of cocaine. Only among police departments serving under 2,500 residents (39%), and sheriffs' departments serving under 10,000 residents (50%) did less than 75% of the departments in a population category report making cocaine seizures. Among police and sheriffs' departments that did seize cocaine, nearly all of them reported seizing the powdered form of the drug, and a majority of them also seized crack cocaine.

A majority of the police departments serving a population of 25,000 or more made heroin seizures, including all of those serving 500,000 or more residents. More than two-thirds of the sheriffs' departments in jurisdictions with a population of 250,000 or more also reported seizing heroin.

Amphetamine seizures were made by 40% of all police and sheriffs' departments, including more than 70% of those serving a population of 50,000 or more. More than half of the departments serving a population of 50,000 or more also reported making seizures of barbiturates, methamphetamines, and LSD. PCP was seized by most of the police departments serving a population of 250,000 or more and the sheriffs' departments serving 500,000 or more.

An aspect of the drug enforcement effort in many jurisdictions involves the operation of special drug enforcement units. Where they exist, such units are an integral part of the law enforcement response to drug

Table 3. Special drug enforcement units operated by local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Agencies operating one or more special drug units* Number	Percent of all agencies responsible for drug enforcement	Number of officers assigned full time Total	Average
All local agencies	3,270	28%	16,520	5
Police departments				
All sizes	2,299	25%	12,715	6
1,000,000 or more	13	93	3,126	240
500,000-999,999	26	95	1,273	48
250,000-499,999	42	100	1,509	36
100,000-249,999	131	96	1,996	15
50,000-99,999	312	94	1,708	5
25,000-49,999	411	62	1,161	3
10,000-24,999	569	36	964	2
2,500-9,999	633	19	772	1
Under 2,500	163	5	206	1
Sheriffs' departments				
All sizes	971	39%	3,805	4
1,000,000 or more	18	92	607	34
500,000-999,999	31	90	551	18
250,000-499,999	47	86	533	11
100,000-249,999	141	77	795	6
50,000-99,999	223	75	515	2
25,000-49,999	222	44	391	2
10,000-24,999	225	28	349	2
Under 10,000	64	11	64	1

Note: Table includes only agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
*Includes only units with at least one officer assigned full time as of June 30, 1990.

Table 2. Seizures of selected types of illegal drugs by local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent of agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement that seized: Marijuana*	Cocaine Total	Cocaine Powder	Cocaine Crack	Amphetamines	Barbiturates	Methamphetamines	LSD	Heroin	Synthetic/designer	PCP	Methaqualone	Morphine/opium
All local agencies	88%	72%	66%	42%	40%	29%	28%	26%	17%	12%	11%	5%	4%
Police departments													
All sizes	86%	70%	63%	42%	38%	27%	24%	25%	17%	10%	10%	5%	4%
1,000,000 or more	100	100	100	100	100	86	86	93	100	64	71	57	57
500,000-999,999	95	100	100	96	92	77	81	88	100	51	58	26	63
250,000-499,999	100	100	100	100	80	67	90	95	91	58	56	22	48
100,000-249,999	99	100	97	92	80	62	75	76	84	44	43	27	23
50,000-99,999	97	97	96	77	73	64	49	64	55	30	32	16	17
25,000-49,999	95	95	94	76	62	44	49	49	50	19	24	6	7
10,000-24,999	94	91	84	58	51	36	33	36	28	12	15	5	6
2,500-9,999	94	79	72	42	41	29	24	22	10	7	7	4	1
Under 2,500	70	39	30	20	17	10	8	8	4	4	2	1	1
Sheriffs' departments													
All sizes	94%	78%	71%	44%	49%	35%	42%	33%	16%	15%	13%	6%	5%
1,000,000 or more	95	95	95	95	90	71	81	81	90	63	68	44	34
500,000-999,999	100	100	97	87	75	66	72	94	88	37	53	37	35
250,000-499,999	100	98	92	87	83	61	68	87	67	27	31	15	25
100,000-249,999	95	97	97	79	68	54	54	66	41	28	32	20	11
50,000-99,999	98	100	94	58	72	58	59	59	28	30	25	11	11
25,000-49,999	94	86	81	50	54	47	43	38	15	16	17	3	2
10,000-24,999	95	77	68	37	43	26	38	22	6	12	5	3	3
Under 10,000	88	50	45	23	27	12	27	9	5	1	4	1	1

Note: Includes any seizure or eradication of illegal drugs or facilities for manufacturing them during the 12-month period ending June 30, 1990.
*Includes hashish.

trafficking and use. Since they focus directly on conducting sophisticated investigations of drug traffickers, these special units accumulate substantial knowledge about drugs in general and about drug-related activity in the community.

Nationwide, an estimated 3,270 local police and sheriffs' departments were operating a special drug unit during the 12-month period ending on June 30, 1990 (table 3). Overall, these agencies had over 16,000 officers assigned to special drug units on a full-time basis. Included in this total were an estimated 12,715 police officers and 3,805 sheriffs' officers.

Over 90% of local police departments serving 50,000 or more residents were operating a special drug unit, and 75% of all local police officers assigned to a drug unit nationwide were in one of these departments. Police departments serving 1 million or more residents had the largest special drug units, an average of 240 full-time officers each. These 13 departments accounted for a fourth of the local police officers assigned to drug units nationwide.

A majority (62%) of the police departments in jurisdictions with 25,000 to 49,999 residents also operated a special drug unit. Local police departments in small towns were the least likely to operate a special drug unit. About 19% of those serving a population of 2,500 to 9,999 and 5% of those serving a population of under 2,500 had such a unit.

Among sheriffs' departments, over 90% of those serving a population of 500,000 or more and over 75% of those serving a population of 50,000 to 499,999 operated a special drug unit. About 44% of the sheriffs' departments serving a population of 25,000 to 49,999 operated a drug unit. In the smallest jurisdictions (under 10,000 residents), 11% of the sheriffs' departments had a drug unit.

The average size of special drug units in sheriffs' departments ranged from 34 full-time officers in departments serving a population of 1 million or more to 1 officer in jurisdictions with fewer than 10,000 residents.

Many local police and sheriffs' departments operated other types of special units that were important to their drug control effort. Over 90% of large police and sheriffs' departments (100 or more officers) with primary drug enforcement responsibilities operated a special unit for drug education in schools during 1990, and nearly 60% were operating a special unit on gangs.

Law enforcement agencies recognize the value of coordinating their efforts to reduce drug abuse. For many police and sheriffs' departments, this coordination involves participating in a multiagency drug enforcement task force. Organizationally, such task forces often involve the cooperation of law enforcement agencies across jurisdictional boundaries and governmental levels.

The police and sheriffs' departments in multiagency task forces develop coordinated enforcement strategies aimed at accumulating the evidence needed to arrest, prosecute, and convict known drug distributors. Typically, these strategies involve the use of informants, surveillance, and undercover operations. They may also include complex financial investigations designed to trace drug distribution networks. The resources of special drug units often play an important role in implementing task force strategies.

Multiagency drug task forces may also attempt to reduce problems associated with the illegal drug trade by including not only law enforcement agencies but also other types of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, business firms, and community groups. By coordinating education and health initiatives these task forces attempt to reduce the harm that illegal drugs do to the community.

Among agencies with drug enforcement responsibilities, about half of the local police departments and two-thirds of the sheriffs' departments participated in a task force during the 12-month period ending on June 30, 1990 (table 4). Overall, an estimated 6,500 local police and sheriffs' departments participated in multiagency drug enforcement task forces during this time period.

Over 85% of the police and sheriffs' departments in each population category of 100,000 or more participated in a task force, including over 95% of the departments serving a population of 500,000 or more. Approximately 80% of the police and sheriffs' departments serving a population of 25,000 to 99,999, 65% of those serving a population of 10,000 to 24,999, and over 40% of those serving fewer than 10,000 residents participated in a task force.

Table 4. Participation in a multiagency drug enforcement task force by local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Agencies participating		Number of officers assigned full time	
	Number	Percent	Total	Average
All local agencies	6,500	55%	9,623	1
Police departments				
All sizes	4,796	51%	6,109	1
1,000,000 or more	13	93	382	29
500,000-999,999	28	100	199	7
250,000-499,999	36	87	262	7
100,000-249,999	117	86	496	4
50,000-99,999	268	81	576	2
25,000-49,999	541	82	837	2
10,000-24,999	1,026	65	1,162	1
2,500-9,999	1,885	55	1,576	1
Under 2,500	882	28	618	1
Sheriffs' departments				
All sizes	1,704	68%	3,514	2
1,000,000 or more	19	95	190	10
500,000-999,999	34	97	230	7
250,000-499,999	50	91	375	8
100,000-249,999	157	86	618	4
50,000-99,999	215	72	564	3
25,000-49,999	402	80	533	1
10,000-24,999	541	66	698	1
Under 10,000	288	42	306	1

Note: Table includes only agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement. Detail may not add to total because of rounding. Any participation during the 12-month period ending June 30, 1990, is included.

During the 12-month period ending June 30, 1990, approximately 6,100 local police officers were assigned to a multiagency drug task force full time. Although police departments serving a million or more residents had the most officers assigned to a task force on average (29), over half of all local police officers assigned to task forces nationwide were employed by departments serving a population of under 25,000.

Sheriffs' departments had about 3,500 officers assigned full time to drug task forces, ranging from an average of 10 officers per department in jurisdictions with 1 million or more residents, to an average of 1 officer per department in jurisdictions with fewer than 50,000 residents.

In addition to multiagency task forces, another innovation for drug enforcement in many jurisdictions is the use of drug asset forfeiture sanctions. Most States have laws that allow the government to seize convicted drug traffickers' cash, bank accounts, planes, boats, cars, homes, and other items purchased with proceeds from the illicit drug trade.

Table 5. Receipt of money or goods from a drug asset forfeiture program by local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Agencies receiving money or goods* Number	Percent
All local agencies	4,701	41%
Police departments		
All sizes	3,531	38%
1,000,000 or more	12	86
500,000-999,999	27	96
250,000-499,999	42	100
100,000-249,999	133	98
50,000-99,999	314	95
25,000-49,999	562	85
10,000-24,999	977	62
2,500-9,999	1,123	33
Under 2,500	342	11
Sheriffs' departments		
All sizes	1,270	51%
1,000,000 or more	19	95
500,000-999,999	34	97
250,000-499,999	52	94
100,000-249,999	160	86
50,000-99,999	241	81
25,000-49,999	269	53
10,000-24,999	340	42
Under 10,000	156	27

Note: Table includes only agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
*During the 12-month period ending June 30, 1990.

State laws vary regarding the disposition of forfeited assets. Most State statutes require that outstanding liens be paid first, and many States require that all forfeited drug assets go to the State and/or local treasury. In some States, law enforcement agencies may keep property such as cars, planes, and boats for official use. In other States, the agencies can keep all property, cash, and proceeds from sales of what is forfeited.

About 4,700 local police and sheriffs' departments reported the receipt of money or goods from a drug asset forfeiture program during fiscal 1990 (table 5). This represented 41% of all local law enforcement agencies with primary drug enforcement responsibilities. A higher percentage of sheriffs' departments (51%) than police departments (38%) had such receipts.

The percentage of local police departments with asset forfeiture receipts was over 95% in jurisdictions with 50,000 to 999,999 residents. Among departments serving 1 million or more residents and those serving 25,000 to 49,999 residents, about 85% received money or goods from an asset forfeiture program. Receiving money or goods from an asset forfeiture program was least likely for police departments serving a population of under 2,500 (11%).

About 95% of sheriffs' departments in jurisdictions with 250,000 or more residents, and about 85% of those serving 50,000 to 249,999 residents had asset forfeiture program receipts during fiscal 1990. In the smallest jurisdictions (under 10,000 residents), an estimated 27% of the sheriffs' departments received money or goods from an asset forfeiture program.

Table 6. Seizures of selected types of illegal drugs by State police departments, 1990

Type of illegal drug seized	Percent of State police departments
Marijuana*	100%
Cocaine, any form	100
Powder	100
Crack	91
Amphetamines	94
Heroin	91
LSD	88
Methamphetamines	88
Barbiturates	85
PCP	74
Morphine/opium	56
Synthetic/designer	53
Methaqualone	47

Note: Table includes only agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement. Includes any seizure during the 12-month period ending June 30, 1990.
*Includes hashish.

State police departments

Thirty-four State police departments, employing approximately 43,000 full-time officers, reported they had primary responsibility for the enforcement of drug laws.

	Number of State police departments	Full-time sworn officers employed
Total	49	52,372
Departments with primary responsibility for drug enforcement	34	43,118

All 34 of these departments reported they made marijuana and cocaine seizures during the 12-month period ending June 30, 1990 (table 6). A large majority of them also seized amphetamines (94%), heroin (91%), LSD (88%), methamphetamines (88%), barbiturates (85%), and PCP (74%).

Like those of local law enforcement agencies, State police drug enforcement strategies often involve the operation of special units, participation in multiagency drug enforcement task forces, and participation in a drug asset forfeiture program.

Twenty-nine (85%) of the State police departments that had responsibility for enforcing drug laws were operating special drug enforcement units (table 7). These 29 departments had assigned a total of 2,138 officers to these units on a full-time basis — an average of 74 officers per department.

Table 7. Special drug unit operation and multiagency task force participation, by State police departments, 1990

Type of drug enforcement activity	Percent of departments	Number of officers assigned full time Total	Average
Operation of special drug unit(s)	85%	2,138	74
Participation in a multiagency drug enforcement task force	91%	900	29

Note: Table includes only agencies with primary responsibility for drug enforcement.

Most of these departments (82%) also operated special units for drug education in schools, and 29% of them had special units for gangs.

Thirty-one of the departments (91%) participated in a multiagency drug enforcement task force during fiscal 1990. These departments had 900 officers assigned to drug task forces, an average of 29 per department. All but two of the departments (94%) responsible for drug enforcement reported they received money or goods from a drug asset forfeiture program during the year.

Table 8. Drug testing of persons arrested by local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent of agencies in which at least some arrestees are tested		
	Total with testing	Agency-operated program	Other operated
All local agencies	38%	6%	32%
Police departments			
All sizes	38%	5%	32%
1,000,000 or more	57	21	36
500,000-999,999	56	10	45
250,000-499,999	39	5	34
100,000-249,999	39	8	31
50,000-99,999	44	8	36
25,000-49,999	44	6	38
10,000-24,999	33	4	29
2,500-9,999	39	5	33
Under 2,500	36	5	31
Sheriffs' departments			
All sizes	40%	10%	30%
1,000,000 or more	60	17	42
500,000-999,999	34	12	23
250,000-499,999	32	6	26
100,000-249,999	22	4	19
50,000-99,999	41	8	34
25,000-49,999	39	7	32
10,000-24,999	42	11	31
Under 10,000	43	14	30

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Drug Testing Policies

Local police and sheriffs' departments

Nearly 40% of local police and sheriffs' departments reported that at least some of their arrestees were tested for illegal drugs (table 8). Drug testing of arrestees was most likely to exist in police departments serving a population of 500,000 or more (56%) and in sheriffs' departments serving a population of 1 million or more (60%).

Among local police departments that reported testing of arrestees, about 1 in 8 were responsible for operation of the testing program. In sheriffs' departments with arrestee testing, about 1 in 4 operated the testing program.

About a fourth of both local police and sheriffs' departments required all applicants for sworn positions to submit to a drug test (table 9). The prevalence of drug testing of applicants increased with the size of the population served. Among local police departments, 80% of those serving a population of 250,000 or more required all applicants for sworn positions to be tested for illegal drugs. About 70% of those serving a population of 50,000 to 249,999 and just under 50% of those serving a population of 10,000 to 49,999 had such a requirement. The percentage of police departments with a mandatory drug testing policy for applicants was smallest among those serving 2,500 to 9,999 residents (25%) and those serving fewer than 2,500 residents (14%).

Table 9. Employees tested for drugs in a mandatory testing program in local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent of agencies with a mandatory testing program for:					
	Applicants*	Probationary officers	Regular field officers	Candidates for promotion*	Officers in drug-related positions	Civilian personnel
All local agencies	25%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Police departments						
All sizes	26%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%
1,000,000 or more	79	29	0	21	43	0
500,000-999,999	71	29	8	18	25	0
250,000-499,999	85	8	5	14	13	5
100,000-249,999	63	7	1	7	10	5
50,000-99,999	71	7	1	9	14	7
25,000-49,999	52	7	4	6	6	8
10,000-24,999	44	7	3	2	5	10
2,500-9,999	25	4	1	1	2	2
Under 2,500	14	3	2	1	1	–
Sheriffs' departments						
All sizes	23%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%
1,000,000 or more	46	0	0	4	10	6
500,000-999,999	42	5	4	0	7	4
250,000-499,999	40	7	0	0	6	3
100,000-249,999	44	3	2	3	6	7
50,000-99,999	33	5	3	3	5	5
25,000-49,999	26	7	7	6	7	7
10,000-24,999	15	2	1	1	2	3
Under 10,000	14	2	1	1	2	2

Note: Mandatory programs are those in which all are tested.
*Sworn positions only.
– Less than 0.5%

Slightly more than 40% of sheriffs' departments serving a population of 100,000 or more had a policy requiring drug testing of all applicants for sworn positions. About 30% of departments serving from 25,000 to 100,000 residents had such a policy. Sheriffs' departments serving a population of less than 25,000 (15%) were the least likely to require all applicants for sworn positions to undergo tests for illegal drugs.

Less than 5% of all local police and sheriffs' departments had a mandatory drug testing requirement for probationary officers, regular field officers, candidates for promotion, officers in drug-related positions, or civilian personnel. In every population category, less than 25% of the police and sheriffs' departments had mandatory drug testing for the above personnel types, except the following: Probationary officers and officers in drug-related positions in police departments serving a population of 500,000 or more.

Drug testing programs employing random selection of applicants or employees were in place in a small percentage of local police and sheriffs' departments (table 10). An estimated 2% of all departments tested applicants through this method, and the percentage of departments with random drug testing was no more than 5% for any personnel position. Random selection testing was most common for officers in drug-related positions employed by police departments serving a population of 1 million or more (36%).

About 10% of all local police and sheriffs' departments required regular field officers suspected of using illegal drugs to take a drug test (table 11). The percentage of departments with suspicion-based testing was similar for other types of employees. About 2% of the departments had such a policy for applicants.

Departments in larger jurisdictions were more likely than those in smaller jurisdictions to have a suspicion-based drug testing program. For example, among local police departments, about two-thirds of local police departments serving 250,000 or more residents authorized testing of regular field officers suspected of drug use, compared to about half of those serving a population of 50,000 to 249,999, about a third of those serving a population of 25,000 to 49,999, and a ninth of those serving population of 2,500 to 9,999. In police departments serving a population of under 2,500, roughly 1 in 30 authorized testing of regular field officers suspected of illegal drug use.

Table 10. Employees tested for drugs in a random selection testing program in local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent of agencies with a random selection testing program for: Applicants*	Probationary officers	Regular field officers	Candidates for promotion*	Officers in drug-related positions	Civilian personnel
All local agencies	2%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%
Police departments						
All sizes	2%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%
1,000,000 or more	0	21	21	7	36	0
500,000-999,999	0	10	10	0	10	3
250,000-499,999	0	19	17	7	22	5
100,000-249,999	0	7	7	1	8	2
50,000-99,999	1	13	11	9	22	4
25,000-49,999	1	6	4	5	5	3
10,000-24,999	1	3	3	2	4	2
2,500-9,999	2	5	6	4	6	4
Under 2,500	2	3	3	2	3	2
Sheriffs' departments						
All sizes	2%	4%	6%	3%	6%	5%
1,000,000 or more	0	7	7	4	7	7
500,000-999,999	0	0	4	0	4	2
250,000-499,999	1	0	0	0	2	2
100,000-249,999	2	6	10	4	6	7
50,000-99,999	1	2	6	4	7	5
25,000-49,999	2	7	10	6	11	9
10,000-24,999	2	3	4	2	4	3
Under 10,000	1	3	4	3	3	4

*Sworn positions only

Table 11. Employees tested for drugs upon suspicion of use in local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent of agencies with a suspicion-based testing program for: Applicants*	Probationary officers	Regular field officers	Candidates for promotion*	Officers in drug-related positions	Civilian personnel
All local agencies	2%	9%	10%	7%	9%	8%
Police departments						
All sizes	2%	9%	11%	7%	9%	8%
1,000,000 or more	7	64	79	50	71	64
500,000-999,999	11	44	61	33	50	47
250,000-499,999	5	69	71	46	59	64
100,000-249,999	2	37	43	22	39	39
50,000-99,999	2	39	48	23	34	29
25,000-49,999	6	28	32	19	25	25
10,000-24,999	4	12	15	9	12	14
2,500-9,999	2	8	11	8	8	8
Under 2,500	2	3	3	3	3	2
Sheriffs' departments						
All sizes	2%	7%	8%	6%	7%	7%
1,000,000 or more	12	34	41	30	34	34
500,000-999,999	5	22	28	17	24	28
250,000-499,999	0	16	21	12	17	18
100,000-249,999	–	18	19	14	17	15
50,000-99,999	1	3	6	2	3	5
25,000-49,999	4	7	10	6	9	9
10,000-24,999	3	5	6	5	5	4
Under 10,000	1	2	2	2	3	2

*Sworn positions only.
–Less than 0.5%.

About 40% of the sheriffs' departments serving a population of 1 million or more had a policy authorizing testing of regular field officers suspected of illegal drug use. About 30% of the departments serving a population of 500,000 to 999,999, and 20% of those serving a population of 100,000 to 499,999 had such a policy. Less than 10% of the sheriffs' departments located in jurisdictions with fewer than 100,000 residents had a policy that authorized drug testing of officers suspected of drug use.

Nationwide, the local police departments that had a suspicion-based drug testing program for regular field officers employed 50% of all local police officers (table 12). The sheriffs' departments with such a testing program employed 31% of all sheriff's officers. An estimated 17% of all local police officers and 12% of sheriffs' officers worked for departments that had a random selection program for regular field officers. About 3% of local police officers and 4% of sheriffs' officers were employed by departments that had a mandatory drug testing requirement for field officers.

Local police departments that tested civilian employees suspected of drug use employed 45% of all such employees nationwide. About 30% of civilian employees in sheriffs' departments worked in department with a suspicion-based testing program for civilians.

Civilian employees in sheriffs' departments were more likely to be a part of a random selection drug testing program than their counterparts in local police departments (9% versus 3%). About 5% of the civilian employees in local police and sheriffs' departments were subject to a mandatory drug testing requirement.

For comparison, the results of a 1988 survey conducted by the Department of Labor showed that 3% of private nonagricultural businesses had a drug testing program of some type, including 43% of those with 1,000 or more employees. Overall, about 20% of private sector employees worked for a company with a drug testing program.*

Among local law enforcement agencies with an employee drug testing program, an estimated 61% of the police departments and 69% of the sheriffs' departments specified dismissal as a possible disciplinary sanction against nonprobationary officers after one positive drug test (table 13).

*Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Survey of Employer Anti-drug Programs*, Report 760, January 1990.

Local police officers testing positive for the first time were most likely to face dismissal as a possible sanction in larger jurisdictions. All police departments serving a population of 1 million or more had a policy specifying dismissal as a possible sanction after one positive drug test, and 83% of those serving a population of 250,000 to 999,999 had such a policy.

Suspension was the most serious disciplinary sanction specified for an initial positive drug test in 14% of the police and sheriffs' departments that tested employees for illegal drugs.

After a second positive drug test by a nonprobationary officer, the percentage of local law enforcement agencies specifying dismissal as the most serious disciplinary sanction increased to 93% for police departments and to 98% for sheriffs' departments.

Table 12. Local law enforcement employees working in agencies with selected types of drug testing programs, 1990

Type of agency and testing program	Percent of all employees	
	Sworn	Civilian
Police departments		
Mandatory	3%	5%
Random selection	17	3
Suspicion of use	50	45
Sheriffs' departments		
Mandatory	4%	6%
Random selection	12	9
Suspicion of use	31	30

Note: Some departments may have operated more than one type of testing program. Percent for sworn employees is based on number of agencies with a testing program for regular field officers. Percent for civilian employees is based on number of agencies with a testing program for any civilian employees.

Table 13. Sanctions for positive employee drug tests in local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent of departments with dismissal or suspension as most serious possible sanction for positive drug tests			
	After one positive test		After two positive tests	
	Dismissal	Suspension	Dismissal	Suspension
All local agencies	63%	14%	94%	2%
Police departments				
All sizes	61%	14%	93%	3%
1,000,000 or more	100	0	100	0
500,000-999,999	83	0	95	5
250,000-499,999	83	4	91	0
100,000-249,999	76	8	95	3
50,000-99,999	54	5	98	2
25,000-49,999	73	0	89	4
10,000-24,999	57	14	86	5
2,500-9,999	64	18	95	4
Under 2,500	54	18	96	0
Sheriffs' departments				
All sizes	69%	14%	98%	–
1,000,000 or more	88	0	100	0
500,000-999,999	44	17	94	6
250,000-499,999	82	5	95	0
100,000-249,999	60	31	100	0
50,000-99,999	89	8	100	0
25,000-49,999	68	6	94	0
10,000-24,999	70	18	100	0
Under 10,000	60	20	100	0

Note: Table includes only agencies with a testing program which specifies sanctions for nonprobationary sworn officers who test positive for drugs.
– Less than 0.5%.

Treatment was specified as a possible alternative for nonprobationary officers with positive drug test results in almost half of the local police and sheriffs' departments with a testing program (table 14). The drug testing policies of local police departments specified treatment alternatives more often than those of sheriffs' departments (49% versus 39%). Treatment alternatives were generally limited to the first offense.

Among police departments, treatment alternatives were most likely to exist in jurisdictions with a population of 50,000 to 249,999, where two-thirds of them had such a policy. Among sheriffs' departments, those serving 500,000 to 999,999 residents (62%) were the most likely to have treatment alternatives specified in their drug testing policy.

Police departments serving a population of 1 million or more (20%) were the least likely of all local law enforcement agencies to specify treatment as a possible alternative for officers who test positive for drugs.

Table 14. Treatment alternative for nonprobationary officers after a positive drug test in local police and sheriffs' departments, by size of population served, 1990

Type of agency and population served	Percent including treatment as a possible response to positive tests*
All local agencies	47%
Police departments	
All sizes	49%
1,000,000 or more	20
500,000-999,999	51
250,000-499,999	51
100,000-249,999	68
50,000-99,999	67
25,000-49,999	52
10,000-24,999	59
2,500-9,999	49
Under 2,500	38
Sheriffs' departments	
All sizes	39%
1,000,000 or more	48
500,000-999,999	62
250,000-499,999	36
100,000-249,999	52
50,000-99,999	36
25,000-49,999	33
10,000-24,999	40
Under 10,000	35

Note: Table includes only agencies with a testing program that specifies sanctions for nonprobationary sworn officers who test positive for drugs.
*After first positive test only.

State police departments

Thirty-three (67%) of the 49 primary State police departments reported that at least some of the persons they arrested were being tested for illegal drugs. Four (8%) of the departments reported that they had primary responsibility for operation of the testing program.

	Percent of departments in which at least some arrestees are tested
Total	67%
Agency-operated program	8
Not agency-operated	59

Just over half (55%) of State police departments reported they required drug tests of all applicants for sworn positions (table 15). Two (4%) of the departments reported they required all regular field officers to undergo tests for illegal drugs, and five (10%) tested all officers working in drug-related positions. None of the State police departments reported having a mandatory drug testing policy for civilian personnel.

Some State police departments used a random selection process to test probationary officers (12%), regular field officers (8%), candidates for promotion (8%), and officers working in drug-related positions (10%). One department (2%) had a random selection drug testing program for applicants, and two departments (4%) required civilian personnel to be included in a random selection drug testing program.

Table 15. Employee drug testing programs in State police departments, 1990

Type of employee	Percent of State police departments		
	Mandatory	Random selection	Suspicion of use
Applicants*	55%	2%	12%
Probationary officers	6	12	37
Regular field officers	4	8	49
Candidates for promotion*	2	8	33
Officers in drug-related positions	10	10	41
Civilian personnel	0	4	45

*Sworn positions only.

Although no State police departments had a mandatory drug testing requirement for civilian employees, nearly half (45%) of all civilian State police employees worked in departments that tested civilian employees suspected of using illegal drugs. A similar proportion of sworn State police employees (53%) were subject to suspicion-based drug testing. About 7% of State police officers were employed by departments with random selection testing for regular field officers and an equal percentage worked in departments with a mandatory drug testing requirement for such officers (table 16).

About three-fourths (77%) of the State police departments with a drug testing program specified dismissal as a possible sanction against probationary officers after one positive drug test (table 17). After a second offense, dismissal was a possible sanction specified by 91% of the departments.

Half of the departments with employee drug testing specified treatment as a possible alternative after the first offense. As in local law enforcement agencies, treatment alternatives were generally not available to State police officers who tested positive for drugs a second time.

Table 16. State police employees working in agencies with selected types of drug testing programs, 1990

Type of testing program	Percent of all employees	
	Sworn	Civilian
Mandatory	7%	0%
Random selection	7	3
Suspicion of use	53	45

Note: See note on table 12.

Table 17. Sanctions for positive employee drug test in State police departments, 1990

	Percent of departments with dismissal or suspension as most serious possible sanction for positive drug test	
	Dismissal	Suspension
One offense	77%	9%
Two offenses	91	5

Note: See note on table 13.

Methodology

The Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey collects data from a nationally representative sample of the nearly 17,000 publicly funded State and local law enforcement agencies in the United States.

All 780 State and local law enforcement agencies in the United States with 100 or more sworn officers (as reported in the 1986 Directory Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies) received the full-length LEMAS questionnaire. The 780 self-representing (SR) agencies were supplemented by a nationally representative sample of all agencies with fewer than 100 sworn officers. These nonself-representing (NSR) agencies were chosen using a stratified random sample with cells based on the type of agency (local police, sheriff, or special police), size of population served, and number of sworn officers. The 2,338 NSR agencies received a slightly abbreviated LEMAS questionnaire, which did not contain items about job classifications, residency requirements, special pay, collective bargaining, police membership organizations, special units, or written policy directives.

The initial mailing of the survey questionnaire was conducted in July 1990. The pay period containing June 15, 1990, was used as the reference date for personnel-related questions and June 30, 1990, for other questions. The data were collected by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

After two followup mailings and additional telephone calls as needed, a final total of 2,945 agencies responded to the LEMAS questionnaire, including 738 SR agencies and 2,207 NSR agencies. The overall response rate was 94.5%. The final database includes responses from 1,830 local police departments, 840 sheriffs' departments, 226 special police departments, and the 49 primary State police departments.

The base weight for all SR agencies is 1. For NSR local and special police departments, the base weight is 8.128, and for NSR sheriffs' departments it is 4.09857. The final weight associated with every agency, both SR and NSR, is the product of the base weight and a factor that adjusted for any nonresponding agencies in each sample cell. This agency nonresponse factor was based on number of sworn officers for SR agencies and on number of agencies for NSR agencies.

Some responding agencies did not completely answer the LEMAS questionnaire. When an agency did not supply a response to an item, a donor agency was randomly selected from responding agencies in the same sample cell. The donor agency's value for the item was placed into the nonresponding agency's response field with an indicator that the value had been imputed. Complete documentation regarding sampling procedures and nonresponse adjustments is available upon request.

Because the data from agencies with fewer than 100 sworn personnel were collected from a sample, the results are subject to sampling error. All statements of comparison in this report have been tested to ensure that observed differences between values are significant at 2 standard errors (the 95-percent confidence level) or higher.

REFERENCES

Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 1990.*

National Institute of Justice, *Local-level drug enforcement: New drug strategies,* March 1989.

National Institute of Justice, *Multijurisdictional drug law enforcement strategies: Reducing supply and demand,* December 1990.

National Institute of Justice, *The police and drugs,* September 1989.

How to order the dataset

Data utilized in this report are available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 1-800-999-0960. The dataset is archived as Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics, 1990 **(ICPSR 9749).**

Brian Reaves, BJS Statistician, wrote this report. Tom Hester edited it. Pheny Z. Smith provided statistical review. Lawrence A. Greenfeld and Richard W. Dodge reviewed the publication. It was produced by Marilyn Marbrook, Priscilla Middleton, Betty Sherman, and Jayne Pugh. The data were collected by the Governments Division, Bureau of the Census.

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