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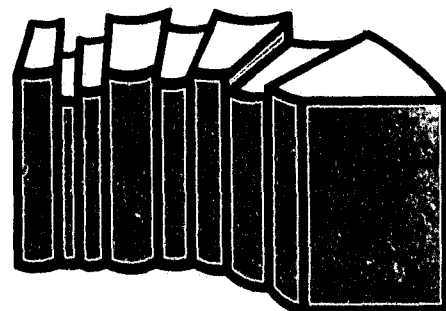
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## Books in Brief

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# A Manual for the Establishment and Operation of a Foot Patrol Program

### Introduction

This manual was designed as a "nuts and bolts" guide for persons interested in establishing a foot patrol program. The practical suggestions contained in the manual were proved effective in an experimental program in Flint, Michigan, between 1978 and 1981. Suggestions cover the specific tasks of establishing a foot patrol program: information gathering and organizing; obtaining funds; selecting and training officers; and managing and supervising the program. The manual also includes a listing of projects undertaken by officers in the Flint Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program, a community analysis worksheet, foot patrol officer information sheets, supervisory forms, a waiver of liability form, and a bibliography.

Foot patrol is a form of policing in which the community collectively identifies local problems and decides what resources can be used to address them. The police interact with the

community, thereby helping it recognize and eliminate the sources of crime. Because communities differ in their problems and resources, foot patrol programs can be as varied as the communities in which they occur. However, the central concept of foot patrol, that of having the officer involved with and accountable to the community, has wide application.

### Establishing a foot patrol program

A fledgling program needs sponsors. Initially, these sponsors engage in critical planning and organizational activities which take the program from the idea to the action stage. Patrons of the program will formulate a focus for the program and develop a formal written proposal. They also will identify leaders who can generate community support for the program.

Information gathering activities, crucial to success, include:

- looking for crime patterns in specific areas of the community to identify "target crimes";
- analyzing the community's economic base, cultural makeup, social organizations, official functions, and crisis management history;
- identifying official and unofficial community systems that can contribute resources to the program;
- identifying leaders by finding out who has the real power and influence in the community, who is asked for advice, and who has a reputation for getting things done; and
- bringing leaders together to find out their concerns.

Resources must be gathered from all segments of the community. Official systems offering resources are the police, courts, schools, and social service and other government agencies. Unofficial systems that can help include private businesses and corporations, church groups, youth programs, ethnic and fraternal organizations, and block clubs. Moreover, the media should be contacted because they can help to garner additional resources.

In identifying potential leaders for a foot patrol program, organizers need

Summarized from *A Manual for the Operation of a Foot Patrol Program* by Robert C. Trojanowicz and Paul R. Smyth with permission of The National Neighborhood Foot Patrol Center, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, 1984. Summary published June 1985.

*A Manual for the Operation of a Foot Patrol Program* is available at no charge from The National Neighborhood Foot Patrol Center, School of Criminal Justice, 560 Baker Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1118.

to look for people who are genuinely interested in innovation and action, leaders who emerge informally from the neighborhoods, and leaders of various social groups. Established leaders, whether they be from a block club, a social relief agency, or the command rank of the police department, are valuable because they reflect the values of their organizations and know how their organizations operate.

### Organizing the meetings

Identified community leaders are brought together at a series of meetings, which eventually will lead to the practical business of planning a foot patrol program. A number of meetings are needed to allow the expression of feelings and frustrations, the admission of facts, and the discussion of factors which create misunderstandings, thus leading to increased understanding and increasingly positive relations. When this process is well advanced, the community leaders can agree on a proposal to be presented to the citizens at a citywide meeting.

**Initial citywide meeting.** Four important goals dictate the agenda of the initial citywide meeting:

- to educate the public as to the history of the foot patrol concept and how it might be modified to suit the community's unique needs;
- to obtain feedback on the proposal from the citizens;
- to achieve a consensus on the description of the individual patrol areas so that the meetings may proceed to the neighborhood level; and
- to develop a timetable for moving the program from the planning to the implementation stage.

Because broad citizen participation is mandatory to success, the meeting should be promoted energetically. The meeting should be announced sufficiently early so that citizens can plan to attend, a press release should be prepared emphasizing important facts, and community service announcements in the local media can promote the meeting. The community's schools, social organizations, businesses, community service

groups, block clubs, neighborhood associations, and churches can also be used to promote the meeting.

When general agreement exists on the thrust of the new foot patrol program, the descriptions of the individual patrol areas, and a timetable for proceeding, the meeting can be divided into smaller groups of citizens from the different patrol areas. These smaller groups can elect a neighborhood leader or "captain" and a secretary, and the captain can establish contact with the police officer who will be assigned to aid and advise the group.

**Neighborhood meetings.** The overall goal of the neighborhood meetings is for citizens and police to develop a model of foot patrol which best suits the unique character of each neighborhood. Specific goals could include:

- confirming the patrol area boundaries and the location of the neighborhood base station—the place where the officer can meet with citizens and store records and files;
- identifying the most important crimes and sources of citizen dissatisfaction and target them for reduction;
- describing the foot patrol officer's routine;
- establishing a formal liaison between the foot patrol officer and civic groups;
- examining ways in which the neighborhood can aid the foot patrol officer; and
- establishing a system for reviewing the officer's performance.

The neighborhood captain coordinates, schedules, and publicizes meetings and informs the police officer assigned to the neighborhood of the meeting dates. The advising officer can offer objective professional advice and can play a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness of the neighborhood meetings.

**Final citywide meeting.** At the final citywide meeting, the program proposal presented in the first meeting and modified in subsequent neighborhood meetings receives formal approval. When the final citywide meeting is adjourned, all participants

should know the beat areas; shifts during which the foot patrol program will operate; duties of the officers assigned to individual neighborhoods; how to contact the foot patrol officer; the location of the base station; when to contact the foot patrol officer and when to contact motorized patrol; how to process complaints; and how the foot patrol officers are evaluated. To succeed, all aspects of the program must be acceptable to community residents, foot patrol officers, supervisors, and department administrators.

### Funding foot patrol

There are increasing signs that public funding for police programs is being curtailed and that funds for new programs will have to come from private sources. The following table lists both public and private funding sources.

#### Public funding sources

Reallocation of existing resources  
State and Federal grants  
Special taxes

#### Private funding sources

Community service groups  
Corporations  
Foundations

Local government can be a good information source about the availability of State or Federal grants—most cities have on the payroll an expert in public sector grants. Citizens in many communities approve new taxes if convinced that the programs being funded will prove effective.

Concerning private funds, community service groups frequently make small to moderate grants and can often be approached informally through the social networks of the community. Corporations make grants of all sizes, though they are commonly a source of moderate grants. It is possible to approach most corporations informally, but in some cases a formal proposal is required. Foundations make grants of all sizes but are better known as the source of large grants. Once foot patrol sponsors identify a funding

source, the process of writing an effective proposal begins.

### Writing the proposal

Foot patrol sponsors must come to the initial citywide meeting with a specific plan. Without a proposal, the meeting can easily degenerate into a formless "rap" session. It is equally important that the proposal be written and available to the public well in advance of the meeting. Competent proposals emphasize the case for foot patrol, the difference between positive and reactive policing, and the services foot patrol can provide. They clearly describe the proposed foot patrol areas and explain the choice; discuss the most important problems in each of the patrol areas and offer suggestions as to how they might be addressed; recommend the placement of "base stations" within individual neighborhoods; and include a proposed timetable for the completion of the planning process.

### Implementing the foot patrol program

**Selection of officers.** Personnel selection is especially critical in foot patrol. If poor personnel selection is a pervasive problem, the foot patrol program rapidly deteriorates and loses public support. Generally, a good foot patrol program needs officers who have some experience because, unlike in a motorized patrol where the new recruit has an older, experienced partner, most foot patrol officers work alone.

Experience is a valuable asset to a foot patrol officer but is not the only consideration. Foot patrol officers should be strong in all of the following areas: interpersonal skills, verbal and written communication skills, motivation, and organization and problem solving. Administrators should try to convince a core of respected and experienced officers to volunteer for foot patrol assignment. Such officers add a high degree of prestige, discipline, and professionalism to the new program.

**Training.** In addition to the same basic training as all other police recruits, foot patrol officers may need

supplemental training in communication skills, interpersonal skills, crisis intervention, and knowledge of community resources and services. In interpersonal skills training, the richness of different cultures can be highlighted, and the corrosive nature of stereotyping should be identified. Techniques which have effectively improved racial and ethnic sensitivity include case studies, role-playing scenarios, and films.

For foot patrol officers, intervening in crises is central to the job. In the proactive model, officers intervene before the individual or society is harmed. Because foot patrol officers are more active in the community, they are in a uniquely strong position to intervene at an early stage. Recognizing the possibility of a crisis and linking individuals to appropriate services is the key. Training sessions should include an inventory of the services available to address medical, legal, financial, marital, parenting, and transportation problems, and lack of food and shelter. A community service manual which indexes services according to the problem areas could be developed as a resource tool for officers.

### Planning for management and supervision

Sound management and supervision is the single most important characteristic of a successful foot patrol program. Two basic principles of sound management are:

- to staff the program with officers who want to be in a foot patrol program and who possess the skills necessary to succeed; and
- to ensure that foot patrol supervisors have their officers available—not assigned elsewhere at short notice.

**The command structure.** The command structure varies considerably from department to department. The foot patrol program in Flint, Michigan, is large, containing a deputy chief, a lieutenant, 9 sergeants, and 64 patrol officers. Administrators worked hard to build a flexible yet disciplined command structure. Basic policy decisions are made at the top, but supervisors at every level can

make adjustments within certain broad limits. Small programs do not necessarily require such a complicated supervisory structure.

**Communications.** Communication and understanding between department divisions and between the department and officers in the field is important. Central dispatch must know which foot patrol officers are working in which districts at any given time, know the officer's routine, and be able to contact the officer rapidly. To improve communications, administrators should explore the possibility of using lightweight electronic communications gear. If this is unavailable, foot patrol officers should call in at regular intervals, and central dispatch should have the phone numbers of "contacts" in the community through whom they can contact the officers.

A system should be set up so that non-emergency complaints which come into central dispatch are quickly and accurately relayed. In time, most citizens will learn to contact the foot patrol officer directly with calls of this sort—therefore recording equipment could be installed on the base station telephone. This is an efficient way of improving communications between the citizens and the officer.

**Matching the officer to the beat.** A good administrator tries to produce a strong match between the strengths of the individual officer and the neighborhood's needs. If possible, the officers themselves should be able to influence their assignment; citizen preference also affects the assignment to some degree. The community analysis worksheet provided in an appendix of the manual is a useful tool for developing this information.

The appropriateness of putting black officers in black neighborhoods, white officers in white neighborhoods, and Hispanic officers in Hispanic neighborhoods is frequently at issue. There are many benefits to matching the officer to the beat on the basis of ethnic and racial consideration. Under these circumstances, officers usually find it easier to communicate with the residents and to gain their trust and acceptance. Yet, as the Flint experience showed, the competence of the individual officer is most important. Another issue fre-

quently raised by citizens is the ability of female officers to function effectively in foot patrol; however, the Flint experiment found that female officers performed very well.

**Supervising for foot patrol.** All supervisor evaluations of officers should reflect the aims of the program. The special skills, attitudes, and characteristics most beneficial to foot patrol should be recognized and rewarded. The special needs of foot patrol officers require a shift in the supervisor's managerial philosophy and pose some unique supervisory problems. The supervisor should judge how well the officer's activities improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, and should not judge the officer solely on the number of arrests because an officer who acquires a reputation for making arrests on the slightest excuse will not be welcome in many houses.

Because it is inherently more difficult to supervise foot patrol officers than motorized patrol officers, some techniques which can help the supervisor include:

- conducting a roll call at the beginning of each shift;
- setting clear management objectives each week and insisting that the objectives be met;
- requiring maintenance of clear duty logs;
- contacting neighborhood residents to determine if the foot patrol officer is performing adequately; and
- making unannounced spot checks.

Some officers are not suited to foot patrol even though they are hard

workers—a supervisor should consider recommending transfer of such an officer. In addition, supervisors should be alert to the possibility of burnout, and protect officers from unreasonable and excessive citizen demands.

### Conclusion

The advent of new forms of foot patrol is an important development in policing. There are, however, two final problems worthy of discussion: the danger of being unresponsive to change; and the danger of unrealistically high expectations.

The makeup of a community can change markedly in a very short period of time. Therefore, police administrators must monitor community developments so that they can make the necessary adjustments to their foot patrol strategy. The problem of unrealistically high expectations can be more serious. If in the planning stage too much emphasis is placed on the positive potential of a program and there are not immediate improvements, the community residents can become cynical and frustrated. Therefore, sponsors of a program should educate the public as to what can realistically be accomplished.

The best test of a police program is the degree of citizen satisfaction with their community—if citizens feel protected in their homes and safer on the streets, and if the shopping areas have become more pleasant and orderly, then the program may be considered a success.

### Further readings:

Evaluation of a Neighborhood Foot Patrol Program. By R.C. Trojanowicz. *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, V 11, N 4 (December 1983), pp. 410-419. NCJ 92106

*Newark Foot Patrol Experiment*. By The Police Foundation. 1981: 143 pp. Availability: The Police Foundation, 1001 22nd Street NW., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20037. Price \$8.00. NCJ 81779

They're Walking the Beat Again. By M.J. Patterson. *Police Magazine*, V 5, N 4 (July 1982), pp. 53-55. NCJ 83555

### Sources on this topic:

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Distributes selected documents related to topic; performs custom searches of data base; subject specialists make referrals; has reading room.

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Police Foundation  
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Washington, DC 20037  
202-833-1460  
Provides information related to topic; publishes periodicals.

**END**