

Advanced Accreditation Training: *Workload Assessment*



Improving Operations, Effectiveness, and Management

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Training Objectives

- Define a Workload Assessment
- Determine the purpose of a Workload Assessment
- Discuss various approaches to workload assessments including pros and cons



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Chapter 21 Introduction

Workload assessments are not necessarily scientific determinations of needs for service, but rather involve deliberations to ascertain the number of personnel necessary to complete a specific number of tasks or to fulfill certain objectives. In contrast, some systems for allocating patrol, traffic, and investigative personnel and for distributing patrol personnel may be better suited to use computer based technology or specific formulas for deploying personnel. While the patrol component of the agency is usually analyzed more frequently to determine workload and establish reasonable response times to calls for service, all components of the agency should be periodically assessed for workload and service demands to ensure the best possible service to the public.



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Purpose of a Workload Assessment

From the Commentary

- *Basing the allocation of personnel on workload demands can have a significant influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. The agency should attempt to prevent over or understaffing by ensuring that the personnel strength of an organizational component is consistent with the workload. The nature or number of tasks and their complexity, location, and time required for completion are some of the factors influencing workload demands. The process of allocating personnel to each organizational component also permits the agency to determine the overall number of personnel required to meet its needs and fulfill its objectives*



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21.2.4

Print

(N/A O M M) Workload Assessments

A written directive requires documented workload assessments of all organizational components be conducted at least once every four years and shall include:

- designation of position responsible for assessments;
- assessment methodology to be used for each component; and
- conclusions and recommendations for distribution / allocation of personnel.



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Workload

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The sum total of cases and other measurable activities occurring within a given area or time period.



Organizational Component

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A subdivision of the agency, such as a bureau, division, section, unit, or position that is established to provide a specific function.



Function

Print

A general term for the required or expected activity of a person or an organizational component, e.g., patrol function, communications function, the planning function, the crime analysis function.



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Standard Commentary

- The intent of the standard is to encourage the equalization of individual workloads among and within organizational components. The written directive should include the position within the organization having responsibility for coordinating the workload assessment process. Due to unique characteristics of some components within an organization, the methodology used to conduct workload assessments may vary. The methodology used for each component should be clearly defined to ensure as much consistency as possible. The analysis should specify all incidents and factors used in making each workload assessment and indicate any time and location factors necessary to complete a task. The method used to determine workload assessments in the patrol component may differ from other components within the agency. **However, all components should receive an assessment.**



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What are some of the Methodologies

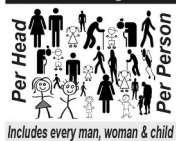
1. Per Capita Approach
2. Minimum Staffing Approach
3. The Authorization Level Approach
4. The Workload-Based Approach



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Per Capita Approach

Per Capita



1. Determine the optimum number of officers per person, then calculating that based on your service population.
2. Compare your agency with other regional and/or similar sized agencies to determine ratio



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Per Capita Approach

Pros

- Easy to determine
- Easy to calculate





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Per Capita Approach - CONS

- Shaky Historical Origins of approach
- Basing your approach on "unscientific" data
- There is already a huge disparity among departments – largely based on budget, not workload
- Quantitative only, does not consider quality, i.e. time spent on calls, types of calls, community needs, etc.

- No consideration of crime rates
- THERE IS NO CONSISTENT, GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE BENCHMARK FOR PER CAPITA OFFICER NEEDS
- Does not account for policing style, community programs or the availability of non-sworn employees



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Minimum Staffing Approach

- Requires the Department to estimate the number of patrol officers they need in order to maintain officer safety and provide for public protection.



A word of caution about "officer safety." We use the term to justify too many things. If you are going to use the term, but sure to objectively define it and have data to support your assertions.



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Minimum Staffing - PROS



- Easy to calculate
- It follows along with the way you are currently “doing business” i.e. no changes, no political conflict
- Community demands are met (in theory) – minimum number on the streets at all times



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Minimum Staffing - CONS

- Self-Fulfilling Prophecy
 - Generally based on Department’s own policies
 - Could be dictated by Collective Bargaining Agreements
 - May be set by ordinance or agreement or charter (See *Minneapolis PD for min staffing set by City Charter*)
- NO GENERALLY ACCEPTED, OBJECTIVE BENCHMARK
- Often based on perceived needs not factual/actual needs
- Due to historic nature, minimum staffing levels often become “optimum” staffing levels without any justification.
- *Remember, minimum staffing levels = increased overtime, in many cases*



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The “Authorized Level” Approach



- Uses budget allocation as the determining factor for staffing (Position Management System – CALEA 21.2.3)
- May use a formal staffing analysis as guidance (Job Task Analysis – CALEA 21.1.1)



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The "Authorized Level" Approach - PROS



- Easy
- Historic



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The "Authorized Level" Approach - CONS

- Politically driven
 - We see how this has worked throughout law enforcement history...
 - Become a political talking point re: understaffed/overstaffed, rather based on community needs
- No identifiable criteria for determination / artificial metric
- Self-Fulfilling Prophecy – “its this way because we say it is”
- What is the definition of “authorized level”



- Perception of understaffed due to “authorized” number creates discontent among officers – perception becomes reality
- The community may feed unsafe due to being “understaffed”



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- A more **comprehensive** attempt to determining appropriate workforce levels considers actual police workload.
- What differentiates this approach is the requirement to systematically **analyze** and determine staffing needs based upon actual workload demand while accounting for service-style preferences and other agency features and characteristics
- Required by the CALEA standards??

Workload-Based Approach



CALEA 21.2.4



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Workload-Based Approach - PROS

- Comprehensive – Considers actual police workload
- Helps predict/estimate future staffing needs through modeling process
- Evidence / Data / Facts



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Workload-Based Approach - CONS

- No universally accepted method for conducting a workload assessment.
- What is “work?” *Need a definition*
–How do you measure it?
- Time intensive – requires extensive calculations
- Difficult / Challenging (*though not impossible*)
- Need to consider many issues outside of traditional patrol duties



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More suggestions from the Commentary

- The allocation of personnel to the patrol component should, at a **minimum**, take into account
 1. the number of incidents handled by patrol personnel during the specified period;
 2. the average time required to handle an incident at the patrol level, which can be computed through a sampling of cases;
 3. calculation of the percent of time, on the average, that should be available to the patrol officer for handling incidents during a specified period, such as an eight-hour shift; and
 4. time lost through days off, holidays, and other leave, compared to total time required for each patrol assignment.
- Patrol personnel should be distributed in accordance with temporal and geographic distribution of incidents or in accordance with community policing strategies. This is one of the primary means of improving the agency efficiency and effectiveness. The agency's system for determining the appropriate proportional distribution should take into account incidents, locations, variations in workload, and deployment strategies.



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Gather the Data

- Patrol Division evaluation
 1. Examine the distribution of calls for service by hour of the day, day of the week and month of the year
 2. Examine the nature of calls for service
 - Geographic location within your community
 3. Estimate time consumed on calls
 4. Calculate the agency relief factor
 5. Establish performance objectives
 6. Provide Staffing Estimates



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Beginning Thoughts

- You may have software that runs these reports
 - Be sure you know how it is synthesizing the data
- Do not just trust the generated data – you must interrogate this data too!

synthesize



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Calls for Service Evaluation

- Initial inquiry
 - CAD Data
 - Are you tracking “pure” calls for service
 - Is other data tracked here? Do you assign incident numbers for meal breaks or officers’ visits to the station?
 - Are other public service calls logged through the CAD that do not require officer response? Facilities/Highway Department callouts? EMS and Fire calls?
 - Can the public self report issues such as missing license plate, mailbox damage, etc.
 - Need a careful examination of the CAD data to get a clear picture.



If there isn't an officer response, it shouldn't be tracked here

If we are analyzing patrol, we must separate out the non-patrol division calls (Detectives, Animal control, marine patrol, etc.



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Calls for Service Evaluation

- Analyze the data
 - Time of Day / Shift
 - Day of Week
 - Month
 - Season



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Calls for Service Evaluation

- Be sure that you are using consistent criteria/definitions for evaluation.
 - Make not of the criteria/definitions in your report so that you employ the same metrics for the next evaluation
- We want to get a consistent picture of the Department's workload



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Nature of your Calls for Service

- What types of calls for service
 - Remember to seek the "pure" data
- Help determine what your officers are doing/what calls they are responding to
 - Remember, our goal is to determine, through this assessment, the best way to serve our community and to allocate resources appropriately



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Nature of your Calls for Service



- Do you have additional classifications that you want to track?
 - More than accreditation...
 - Serious calls v. non-serious
 - Calls related to violence
 - Parking enforcement



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Time consumed on particular calls for service

- What type of calls consume the most of your officers' time?

- Don't forget about follow-up time, warrant prep, court appearances, etc.
- Are you calculating report writing time in the CFS?
- Don't forget about multiple officer response
- What about time in the queue?
- What about response time?
- Once we determine our standard, make sure it is defined so that it can be used in future assessments!



- Are you grouping call types together – must define
- How do you determine call type
 - dispatch code or clearance code?

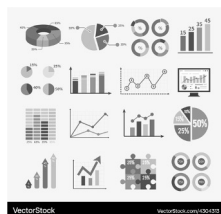


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Data

- This assessment will likely be multiple graphs/charts

- Day
- Hour
- Month
- Season
- CFS overall
- CFS analyzed
- Time spent overall
- Time spent applicable data
- Etc.



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Data

- Now we have sifted through the data to get a realistic picture of what we are called to do,
- Next, we must determine how this applies to the department and how this data to establish workloads in the future



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Shift Relief Factor

- Shows the relationship between the maximum number of days an officer works and how many the officer actually works (time off)
- This helps us determine the number of officers required to each shift
 - Watch for differences due to shifts (8-10-12 hour shifts) and multiple different shifts (swing shifts, overlap, rotating, etc.)
- Determine the amount of time that an officer can take off:
 - Sick, vacation, (compensatory time?) *Should we consider training time in this evaluation??*
 - Look for differences in seniority level that may increase time off
 - Assume the maximum time off when determine shift relief factor



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Shift Relief Factor

- This will help us:
 - Determine the number of officers we need per shift
 - Evaluate the amount of "work" being done by the shift
 - Determine minimum staffing levels to handle the calls for services and the types of calls for service on the shift



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Performance Objectives

- Where do you want your officers to devote their time?
 - Calls for Service
 - Other activities (what are these other activities)
- Early IACP models suggested
 - 1/3 of time for CFS
 - 1/3 of time proactive time (*how do you track traffic posts, time in between traffic stops, general patrolling, etc.*)
 - 1/3 of time administrative duties

This is a simple equation; however, your thorough analysis may paint a different picture – likely will vary by agency



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Performance Objectives

Northwestern University Traffic Institute – Police Allocation Manual

- Reactive: Time spent responding to calls for service
- Proactive: Time spent on self-initiated activities
- Proactive (patrol): Time spent free or uncommitted
- Administrative time: All other activities while on patrol

A different approach with the same goal of determining how our officers spend their time and using that data to determine staffing needs.



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Staffing Estimates

- We have our data
- We have determine how many hours our officers will actually work
- We know what we want our officers to be doing – performance objectives

Now we need to determine staffing needs to make all of this happen



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Staffing Estimates

1. How many officers are required to respond to the calls for service that occur on that shift/beat. *Here we consider number of calls and amount of time spent on these calls, while also considering the relief factor*
2. Determining work schedules



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Limitations

1. Model relies on averages and generalities, may not consider actual needs as carefully.
2. Cannot predict major events/calls which require staffing
3. Unless you further analyze the data, it does not separate officer from supervisor or non-sworn staff
4. In order to get a "complete" picture using the workload analysis, the agency must have sufficient calls for service – suggesting is 15,000+



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What about the other components

- May be harder to evaluate other components
 - Detectives
 - Admin
 - Training
 - Specialty Units (Marine patrol, community service, SRO's)
- Review the job descriptions and task analysis
- Determine their calls for service and time spent on each call/task
- Don't forget your civilian staff – how do you track that (*HR may be very helpful here!*)



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The Report

- Methodology used to assess various components may vary (CALEA 21.2.4(b))
 - Define the methodology (for the next assessment) for each component
 - Specify factors (time, locations, distance, etc.) or incidents used in making the assessment
 - The nature or number of tasks and their complexity, location, and time required for completion are some of the factors influencing workload demands.
 - conclusions and recommendations for distribution / allocation of personnel (CALEA 21.2.4(c))
- Signature of author and “Reviewed by” – CALEA 21.2.4(a)



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Summary

- Data must be tracked
- **ALL** components must be evaluated – agency determines the method
 - Can use various methods for various components within the agency
 - Consider staffing requirements for first responders vs. administrative staff
- There isn't one “correct way” – the goal is to objectively evaluate agency workload and use the data to staff accordingly



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Resources

- Wilson, Jeremy M., and Alexander Weiss. 2014. *A Performance-Based Approach to Police Staffing and Allocation*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
- Weiss, Alexander. 2015. *ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT COMPREHENSIVE STAFFING ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE STUDY*. *Alexander Weiss Consulting, LLC*