

**Performance Audit
Police Case Clearance**

September 2008

City Auditor's Office

City of Kansas City, Missouri

September 8, 2008

Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Council, and Members of the Board of Police Commissioners:

This performance audit focuses on case clearance reporting processes and crime and clearance data reliability. Missouri law requires local law enforcement agencies to report crime statistics monthly to the Missouri State Highway Patrol. The Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) currently reports offense and clearance data in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) summary format. KCPD's efforts to track and report offense and clearance data has been complicated by a recent change in the department's computer system. In addition, the department plans to transition to a new reporting format which will add additional challenges to the accurate reporting of crime and clearance data.

The Kansas City Police Department's clearance data is incomplete. KCPD is not reporting all clearances to Missouri's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. State guidelines define two types of reportable clearances – clearances by arrest and exceptional clearances. The department has not developed the programming capability to transfer clearance data from Tiburon (its new integrated computer system) to ALERT (the department's current computer system used to report UCR summary data). The department is manually entering homicides into ALERT, but not clearances by arrest for other crimes. The department is also not recording exceptional clearances into Tiburon.

There are incomplete or unapproved reports in Tiburon, resulting in fewer offenses and clearances being reported. In addition, incomplete offense reports could delay the start of investigations.

The state rejected KCPD's monthly UCR crime reports from October 2007 through April 2008 due to major data errors. The department submitted the last five months of 2007 crime data to the state late. Submitting inaccurate and late crime reports could result in the department losing state and federal grant money.

The state and the FBI expanded the UCR program to include incident-based reporting. Missouri allows agencies to transition from the UCR summary format to incident-based reporting. Tiburon records data in a way that will allow the KCPD to capture incident-based data, which is more detailed. When the department transitions, it will use Tiburon to do the reporting and no longer need ALERT to report crime data to the state. In order to transition to incident-based reporting, KCPD needs to achieve and maintain a high level of data accuracy. To achieve this level of accuracy, the department needs to provide further technical training on the use of Tiburon as well as incident-based reporting.

We make recommendations intended to increase completeness of crime data, ensure that the department complies with state statute on crime reporting, and increase staff knowledge of the department's computer systems and incident-based crime reporting.

In addition to our review of the department's crime and clearance data, we also reviewed police literature and talked to some police personnel to identify barriers to clearing crimes and factors that could improve case clearance. Those ideas are included in the final section of the report for the department's further discussion and consideration.

We shared a draft report with the chief of police on July 21, 2008. The chief's response is appended. We would like to thank the Police Department for their cooperation in providing documentation and answering questions while they were also dealing with the challenges of implementing a new computer system and preparing to transition to a new reporting format. The audit team for this project was Linna Hung, Sharon Kingsbury, and Sue Polys.

Gary L. White
City Auditor

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Introduction

Objectives

We conducted this audit of police case clearance under the authority of Article II, Section 216 of the Charter of Kansas City, Missouri, which establishes the Office of the City Auditor and outlines the city auditor's primary duties.

A performance audit systematically examines evidence to independently assess the performance and management of a program against objective criteria. Performance audits provide information to improve program operations and facilitate decision-making.¹

This report is designed to answer the following questions:

- Is the reported data on case clearance accurate?
- How can the Police Department clear more crimes?

Scope and Methodology

Our audit focuses on case clearance reporting processes, crime and clearance data reliability, and perceived barriers to solving more crimes. We did not compare Kansas City's crime and clearance data with national averages. We did not analyze the prevalence and clearance of categories of offenses. Due to the problems we found with data reliability, we did not believe this analysis would be meaningful.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. No information was omitted from this report because it was deemed privileged or confidential. Our methods included:

- Reviewing data entry processes and controls over data.

¹ Comptroller General of the United States, *Government Auditing Standards* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office 2003), p. 21.

- Reviewing department policies and procedures.
- Reviewing *A Blue Print for the Future, KCPD Efficiency Study*.
- Reviewing KCPD's crime data reported to the state.
- Reviewing Uniform Crime Reporting and Incident-Based Reporting guidelines.
- Interviewing staff from Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Grants, Missouri Department of Public Safety.
- Interviewing staff from Criminal Justice Information Services, Missouri State Highway Patrol.
- Interviewing a limited number of patrol sergeants and detectives, and other stakeholders to understand perceived barriers to solving more cases.
- Reviewing case clearance and police investigation professional literature.

Background

Missouri statutes require that law enforcement agencies report crime statistics. Missouri law² requires the Department of Public Safety to maintain an information system for analyzing and retrieving crime incident and arrest reports from law enforcement agencies in the state. In 2001, Missouri instituted mandatory reporting on a statewide basis. Every law enforcement agency in the state must report crime statistics monthly to the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Once the state compiles the data, they forward it to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for their work on national Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics. The FBI compiles, publishes, and distributes the data to participating agencies, state UCR programs, and others interested in the nation's crime data.

The Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) reports data to the state using the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) summary format. UCR summary is one of two standardized crime-reporting formats. The summary format categorizes and counts only the most serious crime within an incident.

² Mo. Rev. Stat. §43.505 (2003).

The Kansas City Police Department plans to transition to an incident-based reporting system (IBRS) from the UCR summary format. Incident-based reporting involves collecting comprehensive data on each criminal incident and arrest. IBRS looks at detailed offense, offender, victim, property, and arrest data. Multiple types of crime can be reported within one incident. Implementation of the incident-based reporting format is voluntary in Missouri.

The KCPD is transitioning to a new integrated information system. Patrol officers and detectives directly enter offense, arrest, and other reports into Tiburon, their new computer information system. Prior to Tiburon, KCPD officers and detectives handwrote or word-processed reports. Data entry clerks would then enter offenses and arrest information from the reports into ALERT. The department sent a UCR summary report of that data from ALERT to the state. Tiburon has the capacity to report crime data to the state in an incident-based format, but because the department has not transitioned to that format yet, the offense and arrest report data entered into Tiburon still has to be transferred to ALERT for reporting to the state.

Definition of Terms

The Automated Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT). ALERT is a computerized information system KCPD operates and manages. It provides access to arrest, court, and criminal records to participating criminal justice agencies in the region. The KCPD uses ALERT to report Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data to the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

A Blue Print for the Future. The Blue Print is an assessment of the Kansas City Police Department, which contains observations and recommendations related to management, organization, and operations. It evaluated opportunities for improvement in the productive use of the department's law enforcement and civilian workforce. The assessment was done by Berkshire Advisors, Inc., general management consultants to public-sector organizations.

Case Clearance. Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines considers a case cleared under one of two conditions - by arrest or by exceptional means.

Clearance by Arrest. Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines define clearance by arrest when at least one person involved in the commission of the offense has been arrested, charged, and turned over to the court for prosecution.

Clearance Rate. Clearance rate is a measure of the number of arrests in a given time period divided by the number of offenses committed in that same period.

Exceptional Clearance. Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines define an offense cleared by exceptional means when something beyond law enforcement control prevents filing formal charges against the offender. Agencies can clear an offense exceptionally if (1) the identity of the offender is known; (2) there is enough evidence to support an arrest and charge for the offense; (3) the location of the offender is known; and (4) there is some reason outside of law enforcement control that precludes arresting, charging, and prosecuting (i.e. offender's death).

Incident-Based Reporting. An incident-based reporting system involves comprehensive data collection at the incident level on the various aspects of reported incidents. Implementation of the incident-based reporting format is voluntary in Missouri. Missouri calls its implementation of the incident-based reporting format MIBRS.

Definition of Terms (continued)

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Format. NIBRS is a standardized incident-based reporting system. The NIBRS format is an effort introduced by the FBI to redesign the UCR Program. The NIBRS format collects comprehensive data on 22 offense categories made up of 46 specific crimes in an effort to improve the quantity, quality, and timeliness of data collected.

Tiburon. Tiburon is the Police Department's integrated computer system. It includes computer-aided dispatch, automated record system, records management system, and a corrections management system. The department began transitioning to Tiburon in 2006. Patrol officers and detectives directly enter offense, arrest, and other reports into Tiburon. The reports for an incident are linked in Tiburon by the offense number.

Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Uniform crime reporting is a collective effort on the part of city, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies to present a nationwide view of crime. For the most part, agencies submit crime reports monthly to a centralized crime records facility within their state. The state UCR Program then forwards the data, using uniform offense definitions, to the FBI's national UCR Program.

Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Summary Format. Uniform Crime Report summary format consists of monthly counts of offenses and arrests for certain offense categories. If several offenses are committed at the same time and place by a person or a group of persons, the UCR hierarchy rule requires that the highest on the hierarchy list of offenses is counted and not the other offenses.

Police Case Clearance

Findings and Recommendations

Summary

The Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) is reporting incomplete crime data to Missouri's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. The department has not developed the programming capability to transfer clearance data from their new computer system, Tiburon, to ALERT, the department's computer system used to report UCR summary data. The department is manually entering homicide data into ALERT, but not clearances by arrest for other crimes. The department is also not recording exceptional clearances into Tiburon. KCPD underreports clearances if it does not report all clearances by arrest and exceptional clearances.

The department has incomplete or unapproved reports in Tiburon, resulting in incomplete offense and arrest data. The number of both reported offenses and arrests affects the department's clearance rate. Incomplete offense reports could also slow the start of investigations.

The state rejected KCPD's monthly UCR crime reports from October 2007 through April 2008 due to major data errors. The department has also been submitting its crime data to the state late. Submitting inaccurate and late UCR data to the state could result in the department losing state and federal grant money.

The department should ensure that offense and clearance data is complete and accurate and reported timely to the state.

KCPD plans to transition to Missouri's incident-based reporting format, MIBRS. Tiburon records data in a way that will allow the KCPD to capture incident-based data, which is more detailed. In order to transition to incident-based reporting, the KCPD needs to achieve and maintain a high level of data accuracy. To achieve this level of accuracy the department needs to provide further technical training on the use of Tiburon as well as training for department personnel on incident-based reporting.

A review of police literature and discussions with a few KCPD detectives and patrol sergeants identified potential barriers to clearing crimes as well as factors that could improve case clearance. Those ideas

are included in the final section of the report for the department's further discussion and consideration.

Case Clearance Data Is Flawed

The Kansas City Police Department's (KCPD) clearance data is flawed. Recently, the KCPD has only been reporting homicide clearances to the state, because Tiburon does not have the capacity to transfer clearance data to the computer system used to report UCR summary data to the state. The department has also not been recording exceptional clearances into their computer system. Additionally, the department has unfinished or unapproved reports in Tiburon, resulting in incomplete offense and arrest data and possibly slowing the start of investigations. The state rejected seven months of UCR summary reports, due to data errors. The department is also submitting its data late. Submitting inaccurate and late UCR data could jeopardize the department's grant funding.

KCPD's Uniform Crime Reporting Data Is Incomplete

KCPD is not reporting all clearances by arrest to the state. This is a result of Tiburon not having the ability to automatically transfer clearance data to ALERT, the system used to report UCR summary data to the state. KCPD is also not recording exceptional clearances in Tiburon. As a result, KCPD clearances are underreported. In addition, the Police Department's offense and arrest data is incomplete. The department has over 2,400 reports entered into its new computer system, which were incomplete or unapproved for long periods of time. These reports result in incomplete offense and arrest data reported to the state. Unfinished and unapproved reports can also delay the start of investigations.

KCPD is not reporting all clearances by arrest³ to the state. KCPD is only reporting homicide clearances, according to the KCPD data entry supervisor who is responsible for reporting offense and clearance data to the state. The unreported arrest data negatively affects the department's clearance rate. The Police Department said that the problem they are having is that the computer program they developed to transfer both offense and arrest data from Tiburon into ALERT only transfers offense data. The arrest data is not transferring. The department's data entry supervisor said they manually enter homicide data into ALERT but said

³ Clearance by arrest is one of the types of clearances law enforcement is required to report to the state. Law enforcement clears a case by arrest when at least one person involved in the commission of the offense has been arrested, charged, and turned over to the court for prosecution.

that they do not have time to do that with the other clearances. KCPD's homicide clearances account for a very small portion (2% from 2000-2005) of their Part I⁴ UCR clearances. The department continues using ALERT to report UCR summary data until the transition to incident-based reporting is complete. When the department eventually reports in the incident-based format, they can do that directly from Tiburon.

In order to report complete and accurate UCR summary clearance data to the state, the chief of police should ensure that the department transfers all clearance data to ALERT or develops some other method for consistently reporting UCR clearance data.

KCPD is not reporting exceptional clearances⁵. As of February 2008, the data entry section was not recording exceptional clearances. The Police Department's data entry supervisor said the data entry unit is responsible for inputting exceptional clearance data directly into Tiburon and ALERT. Although the supervisor stated that there are numerous exceptional clearances, she said that her unit was not entering them. By not reporting exceptional clearances, the department's clearance rate will be lower than it should be.

To improve the accuracy of the department's clearance rate, the chief of police should ensure that exceptional clearances are regularly entered into Tiburon and reported to the state.

Incomplete police reports affect accuracy of crime data. Over 2,400 reports dating from October 2006 to February 15, 2008 are not finished or approved in KCPD's computer system resulting in incomplete offense and arrest data. KCPD started most of the unfinished reports during the second half of 2007 to mid-February 2008. (See Exhibit 1.) Of the 2,428 incomplete or unapproved reports, about a third were original offense reports. Offense reports provide the data for the department's total number of offenses. The remaining reports could be arrest reports or other supplemental reports started by detectives during their investigations. Arrest reports provide the data for clearances.

⁴ Uniform Crime Reporting tracks Part I and Part II crimes. Part I crimes include criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft (except motor vehicle theft), motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part II crimes encompass all other reportable classifications. The UCR system includes crimes that are most likely to be reported to the police and that occur frequently enough to provide an adequate basis for comparison.

⁵ Exceptional clearance is one of the types of clearances law enforcement is required to report to the state. Law enforcement clears a case by exceptional means when there is enough evidence to charge and prosecute a suspect but for reasons beyond their control (such as death of the suspect), they cannot.

Exhibit 1. Outstanding Reports

	In Progress ⁶	Owner Approved ⁷	Unapproved ⁸	Total
October 2006	1		1	2
November 2006		2	2	4
December 2006	1	3	2	6
January 2007	1	3	1	5
February 2007	1	1	2	4
March 2007	7	6	4	17
April 2007	7	20	13	40
May 2007	17	44	48	109
June 2007	29	31	30	90
July 2007	33	52	60	145
August 2007	43	63	46	152
September 2007	29	94	46	169
October 2007	39	107	46	192
November 2007	55	117	51	223
December 2007	48	146	109	303
January 2008	72	285	117	474
February 1-15, 2008	87	313	93	493
Total	470	1,287	671	2,428

Source: KCPD, Outstanding Reports, February 29, 2008.

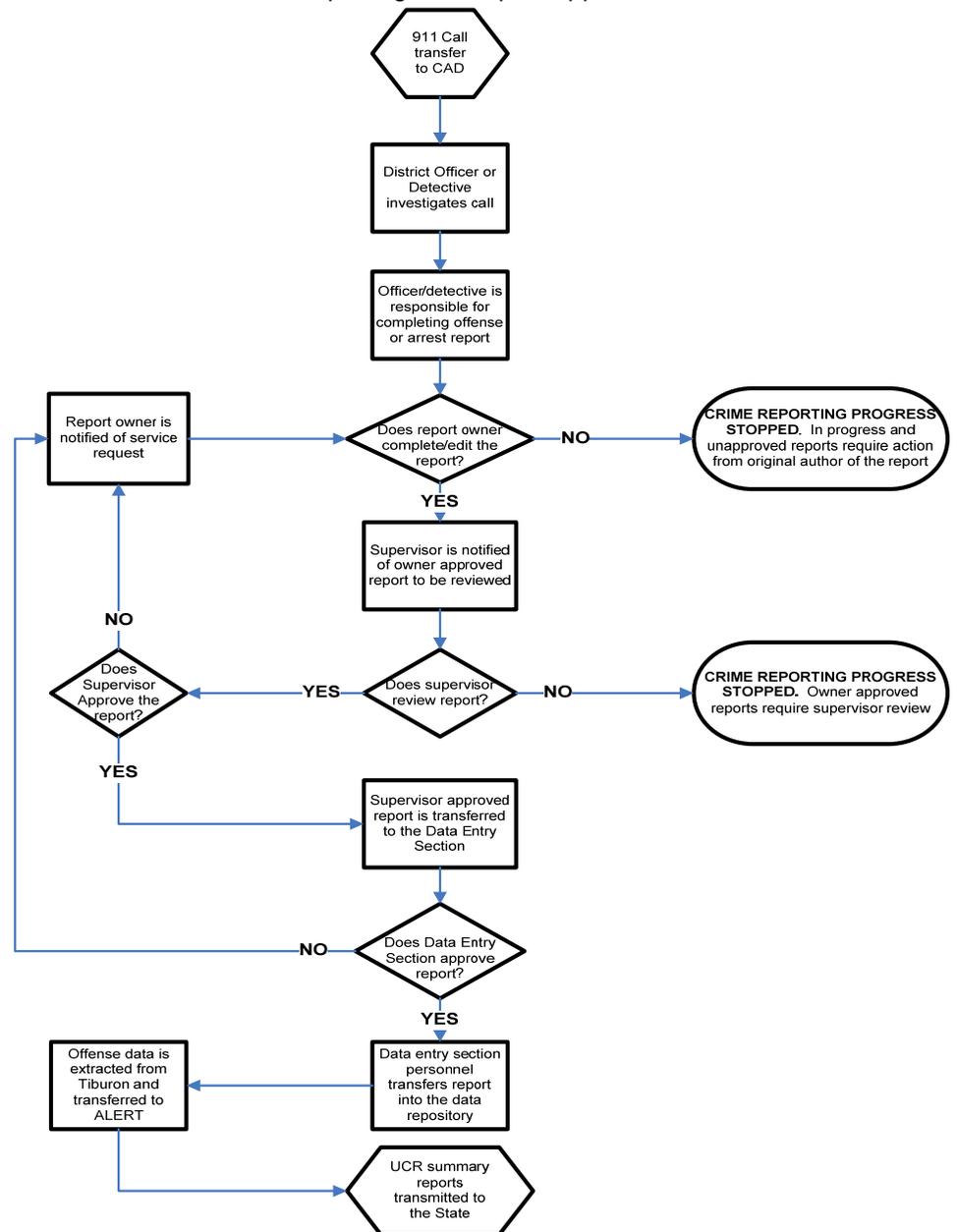
The 2,428 outstanding reports were in different phases of the writing and approval process but had not made it far enough for KCPD to include the data in what it reports to the state. In order for crime data to be included in the department's report to the state, a report must be: (1) approved by the person who wrote it; (2) approved by the supervisor; and (3) approved and transferred to the data repository by a member of the data entry section. If the department does not approve the report at any of these points, the reporting process is stopped, and the information will not be included in the department's report to the state. (See Exhibit 2.)

⁶ "In-progress" indicates the original author of the report has not completed it.

⁷ "Owner approved" means the original author has completed the report and submitted it to a supervisor, but the supervisor has not yet approved it.

⁸ "Unapproved" indicates that the supervisor reviewed the report but returned it to the original author for editing.

Exhibit 2. KCPD's Crime Reporting and Report Approval Process



Source: KCPD personnel interviews and Automated Record System User's Manual, January 8, 2007.

Of the 2,428 outstanding reports in the system, 47 percent were either not completed by the original author or returned to the original author for revision. More than half of the outstanding reports were waiting for supervisor approval. The approving supervisor is responsible for ensuring the report is correct and complete. The supervisor routes approved reports to the data entry section for additional review and transfer to the department's data repository.

The department's backlog of outstanding reports affects the completeness and accuracy of the crime data it reports to the state. If the department does not complete, approve, and submit reports, offenses and clearances will be underreported.

Detectives may not be able to proceed with investigations if offense reports are not complete. Police management said that they usually hold unapproved case reports of property crimes until the supervisor approves the report, unless it is an in-custody arrest. Management reported that robbery, domestic violence, sex crimes, and assault units would assign cases with unapproved offense reports if they contained enough information to investigate. However, if the report is missing elements necessary for investigation, these units will wait until the supervisor approves the report before assigning it. Management said that supervisors review cases on a daily basis and they have the ability to view case reports that are not yet supervisor approved.

Even though supervisors can see all reports whether they are complete or not, the fact that they are incomplete may delay their investigation. The chief of police should ensure that procedures are in place to complete and process all offense and related reports in a timely manner, so that investigations are not delayed and all offenses and arrests are reported.

State Found Errors in Many KCPD Monthly Reports

While the state approved KCPD's monthly reports for January through September 2007, it rejected October 2007 through April 2008. The state reviews law enforcements' monthly data submittals and approves, rejects, or requires data verification due to data discrepancies. The state rejects reports if major data errors exist. Some of the reasons the state rejected KCPD's monthly reports include nearly three times as many offenses from previous months and more than a 10 percent decrease in reported clearances compared to the same month the prior year. The Criminal Justice Information Services manager for the Missouri Highway Patrol said significant changes in the data are an indicator that problems may exist with data collection or the records management system. By mid-June 2008, KCPD had not modified, updated, or corrected the rejected months according to the state.

KCPD Not Meeting State's Reporting Deadline

The KCPD is not meeting the state's crime reporting deadlines. The Missouri State Highway Patrol requires law enforcement agencies to submit monthly crime reports to the state by the 28th of the following

month. KCPD submitted the last five months of 2007 UCR summary data late.

KCPD's Inaccurate and Late Reports May Jeopardize Some Grant Funding

According to state law, one of the consequences of not following the state's reporting requirements is ineligibility to receive state or federal funds. Some state agencies check law enforcement agencies' compliance with the Uniform Crime Reporting statute while reviewing grant applications. For example, the Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Missouri Department of Transportation require UCR compliance for grant eligibility. Both agencies review grant applications for state and federal funding. Program staff at the DPS reported that program specialists considered the timeliness, completeness, and the accuracy of law enforcement agencies-UCR reports. They review non-compliance on an individual basis but generally, they follow the practice that discrepancies in three or more monthly reports are an automatic denial of funding.

To comply with Missouri State statute and not jeopardize KCPD's grants, the chief of police should ensure that the department reports accurate crime data by the state's deadline.

KCPD Needs Training to Successfully Transition to Incident-Based Reporting

In order to transition to incident-based reporting, the KCPD needs to achieve and maintain a high level of data accuracy. The department needs to provide further training in the use of Tiburon as well as incident-based reporting. Detectives are recording arrests incorrectly in Tiburon, which will affect the accuracy of KCPD's incident-based reporting. In addition to training on Tiburon, KCPD needs additional training on how to classify offenses in the incident-based format.

State Certification Requires High Level of Accuracy

The state must certify law enforcement agencies to report in Missouri's incident-based format (MIBRS). According to KCPD's data entry supervisor in charge of state crime reporting, the department would currently fail to meet the data compliance rate. Agencies seeking incident-based reporting certification must submit files and receive a 96 percent or better compliance rate for three consecutive months. Once an agency submits its monthly file to the state, the state processes the files for errors. Based on the number of errors, the state assigns the file a

compliance rating. The state can also decertify an agency if it fails to meet the 96 percent compliance rating for three consecutive months. After an agency is decertified, it must start the process all over again.

KCPD Needs More Training on Tiburon

The department is not consistently using the correct function in Tiburon to record arrests. The ARREST tab is a report in Tiburon used to capture arrest information. Tiburon will record a clearance by arrest when the arresting officer completes the ARREST tab and the detention center completes the booking information in Tiburon's Corrections Management System (CMS). Some detectives told us they do not use the ARREST tab and were confused when its use was appropriate. Fugitive Apprehension and Arraignment Unit (FAU)⁹ management said that FAU detectives use the CMS to record arrests instead of the ARREST tab. They need to use both the CMS and the ARREST tab to record the arrest correctly. The department's incorrect use of Tiburon's arrest function will result in the department underreporting clearances.

To ensure timely and accurate recording of clearances by arrest and to help the department achieve the required compliance rate for incident-based reporting, the chief of police should require additional training on the proper use of Tiburon's ARREST tab.

KCPD Needs Additional Training to Implement Incident-Based Reporting

As KCPD transitions to incident-based reporting it will be important for department personnel to understand the difference between UCR summary and incident-based reporting and why it is important to correctly classify offenses. The KCPD personnel taking the original offense report makes the first effort at classifying the offense. Accurately classifying an offense should help move the report more quickly through the approval process and help ensure that data provided to the state is correct. A patrol sergeant we interviewed said his officers have had some problems with understanding the new offense categories. He said data entry returns cases to officers to fix the offense codes. The sergeant said there are problems especially when an incident involves complex and multiple offenses where categories are not clear-cut.

⁹ The Fugitive Apprehension and Arraignment Unit (FAU) apprehends suspects and manages the arraignment process. The FAU supports all divisions, units, and other sections within the Investigations Bureau of the KCPD.

The department offers incident-based training three to four times a year. The training offered is mandatory for data entry personnel but is optional for officers and sergeants. During our interviews, some department personnel reported they had little or no knowledge of incident-based reporting requirements and the department's transition to a new method of reporting crime data. Some personnel recalled incident-based training as a brief part of the two-day Tiburon training; others had no recollection of the training. In order to ensure the correct categorization of crime offenses and the reliability of the offense data, the chief of police should require mandatory training on incident-based reporting for police personnel.

Clearing More Crimes

To answer our objective – how can the department clear more crimes, we reviewed police literature and talked to KCPD personnel. Police research identifies factors that relate to solving crimes and basic management principles and practices for the investigative process. We also spoke with KCPD patrol sergeants and detectives and asked them to describe barriers they perceive affect their ability to solve crimes. We did not examine whether the department already incorporates the factors identified by research into its work, nor did we verify the perceived barriers identified by KCPD personnel or the validity of their suggestions for solving more crimes. Both the factors described in literature and the perceived barriers by KCPD personnel included in this report are meant to provide the department with material for discussion and consideration.

Literature Identifies Effective Ways to Manage Police Investigations

Researchers identified factors that affect law enforcement's ability to clear homicides.¹⁰ They include the initial police response, actions by detectives, and other police actions. (See Exhibit 3.)

¹⁰ Charles Wellford and James Cronin, "Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates," *National Institute of Justice Journal*, April 2000, pp. 3 – 7.

Exhibit 3. Factors That Are Predictors of Clearing Homicides
Actions of the First Officer on the Scene

Immediately notify the homicide unit, medical examiner's office, and the crime lab.

Secure the area and attempt to locate witnesses.

Actions of Detectives

Arrive at the scene within 30 minutes.

Assign three or four detectives to the case.

Describe the crime scene in their notes, including measurements.

Follow up on all witness information.

Other Police Actions

Conduct a computer check, using the local Criminal Justice Information System, on the suspect, the gun, and any witnesses.

Obtain information from witnesses at the scene including circumstances of the death, motivation, identification of the suspect or victim, and whereabouts of the suspect.

Interview witnesses, friends, acquaintances, and neighbors of the victim.

Use confidential informants.

Interview the attending physician and medical personnel.

Have medical examiner prepare a body chart of the victim.

Source: "Clearing Up Homicide Clearance Rates," *National Institute of Justice Journal*, April 2000, p. 4.

*Local Government Police Management*¹¹ from the International City/County Management Association describes several management principles and practices of investigative work. Some of the principles and practices addressed include initial police response to an offense, the follow-up investigation, and police interaction with the prosecutor. (See Exhibit 4.)

¹¹ William A. Geller, Editor, *Local Government Police Management*, Fourth Edition, International City/County Management Association (ICMA), 2003, Chapter 6, Criminal Investigations, pp. 169-205.

Exhibit 4. Management Principles and Practices of Investigative Work

Initial Response

Train police phone operators to help initiate an investigation by obtaining enough information to allow dispatchers to send the appropriate investigative unit to the crime scene. Operators can also advise callers on how to preserve the crime scene.

Quality of the initial investigation is critical. It usually takes place within hours or minutes of the report of the offense.

Train patrol officers (as well as detectives) in investigative techniques.

Provide ready access to support and clerical assistance if patrol officers are to handle the complete crime investigation. Patrol cars and squad rooms do not make good offices.

Police managers need to pay attention to the identification of witnesses, especially during the initial investigation, by canvassing neighborhoods for witnesses.

Determine at the end of the initial investigation whether further investigative work is needed based on the evidence. Screen out cases without substantial leads—particularly property crimes—from the investigative process.

Inform the victim whether they are going to pursue the case. Under no circumstances should the victims be led to believe their case is being pursued when it is not.

Follow-up Investigation

Interview witnesses and informants in order to develop suspect names and links to other crimes.

Place greater emphasis on developing informants.

Follow written policies in the collection of physical evidence.

Develop a system to deal with un-served warrants. Some departments have a special squad to serve old warrants on hard-to-find suspects. Others use tickler files to remind investigators to look for suspects in old cases.

Involvement with the Prosecuting Attorney

Develop procedures with the prosecutor's office to expedite the effective and efficient handling of cases.

Understand the evidence needed by the prosecutor for each type of offense.

Try to resolve conflicts that may arise between police investigators and assistant prosecutors.

Prosecutors provide feedback to police investigators about the disposition of cases.

Source: *Local Government Police Management*, ICMA, 2003.

KCPD Perceives Barriers to Clearing Crimes

We interviewed two patrol sergeants and five detectives and asked them what barriers they perceive are preventing them from clearing more crimes. The sergeants and detectives identified both barriers and suggestions for clearing more crimes. (See Exhibit 5.)

Exhibit 5. KCPD Personnel's Perceived Barriers and Suggestions for Clearing More Crimes

Patrol Sergeants

The department should train patrol officers to link crime scene photos to cases which would provide detectives with additional leads. They need more cameras.

Patrol officers could be more effective in the initial investigations if they had additional training on DNA collection techniques.

Better communication between detectives and patrol officers is needed. Locating detectives and patrol officers together would be better.

More and faster computers at the station and in patrol cars would reduce report-writing time.

Patrol stations are not notified routinely of warrants. Patrol officers can take the initiative when they have down time to look up outstanding warrants in their beats and seek out suspects.

Detectives

Initial reports lack detail. The academy should stress report writing skills.

Homicide detectives sharing take home vehicles delays their arrival on the scene.

In order to follow-up on leads and solve crimes, the public must be willing to come forward. A better witness protection program could help.

The department needs to focus on retaining experienced detectives. One retention method described was offering a 10/4 work schedule in the violent crimes units.

The homicide unit should have a permanent day squad that handles calls and investigates suicides and dead bodies. This would allow homicide detectives to put more work into their cases and allow for the training of new detectives on the day squad.

The department should allow detectives to transfer between violent crimes units (homicide, robbery, sex crimes, and domestic violence) after one year of service in these units instead of the "unwritten rule" which requires two years of service in a unit before transfer.

Additional detectives would help with the caseload.

Detectives should have better access to internet websites, as well as better computers and better video equipment at headquarters.

Faster turn around from the crime lab would help robbery investigations.

Detectives should do DNA buccal swabs on everyone in interrogation.

Property crime cases should not be assigned if there is no potential for solving the case. It would be better to send a letter to the victim saying that the case will be inactive until a viable lead comes up and then it will be assigned to a detective.

Property crime unit should get prosecutors, judges, and jails on board to target pattern crimes and become more proactive. There should be regulations prohibiting plea bargaining with pattern crime suspects and suspects with drug problems.

Source: Interviews with KCPD Patrol Sergeants and Detectives, 2007.

Recommendations

1. The chief of police should ensure that the department transfers all clearance data to ALERT or develops some other method for consistently reporting complete and accurate UCR summary clearance data to the state.
2. The chief of police should ensure procedures are in place to regularly enter exceptional clearances and report the data to the state.
3. The chief of police should ensure procedures are in place to complete and process all offense and related reports in a timely manner.
4. The chief of police should ensure that the department reports accurate monthly crime data by the state's deadline.
5. The chief of police should require additional training on the proper use of Tiburon's ARREST tab.
6. The chief of police should make training for incident-based reporting mandatory for police personnel.

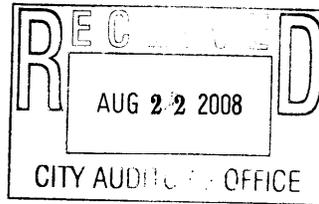
Appendix

Chief of Police's Response

Police Case Clearance

Police
KC/MO

James D. Corwin
Chief of Police



Chief's Office
1125 Locust
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
www.kcpd.org

Office (816) 234-5010
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August 21, 2008

Mr. Gary White
Office of the City Auditor
21st Floor, City Hall
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Dear Mr. White:

I have reviewed the Clearance Rate Audit and offer the following comments:

I appreciate the work the audit team has done on the audit findings and recommendations. As Chief, I have repeatedly emphasized the need for better information in our systems. Better information, with appropriate analysis, enables us to make strategic and operational recommendations and decisions.

The Department has submitted UCR summary data for years without incident. When the decision was made to transition from UCR summary reporting to incident based reporting I knew it would come with many challenges but also many rewards. Major cities that have chosen to transition to incident based reporting have struggled for years to meet the new demands of this type of data collection and reporting. The new incident based data collection and reporting is significantly different and more rigorous than the older UCR format, typically in use in most police departments. Our transition has been difficult but our goal of enriching the data is still good, achievable and will provide the department and community with better information about the performance of our highly professional police department.

The recommendations contained in the audit are items the department has been working through for a number of months. As we encounter issues with the transition to incident based reporting, we work to correct the problems, but have not corrected the transitional problems as quickly as we would have preferred. We agree that the recommendations will pave the way to acceptable incident based data collection and reporting. Our specific responses to the recommendations follow.

Recommendation 1: The Chief of Police should ensure that the department transfer all clearance data to ALERT or develop some other method for consistently reporting complete and accurate UCR summary clearance data to the state.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The goal of the recommendation is to report acceptable and accurate UCR summary data while we transition to incident based reporting; therefore we will accomplish this by developing robust reports from the data collection instrument – Tiburon. This will enable us to seamlessly move from UCR summary based reporting to incident based reporting while in the same application.

Recommendation 2: The Chief of Police should ensure procedures are in place to regularly enter exceptional clearances and report the data to the state.

Response: We agree. A new procedural policy is in place and being reviewed and updated. Once the policy is approved, it will be implemented.

Recommendation 3: The Chief of Police should ensure procedures are in place to complete and process all offense and related reports in a timely manner.

Response: We agree. Changes to our draft procedural policy are being added. Operational accountability measures have been approved. The accountability measures will provide for periodic reporting of the timeliness of report submissions. A Crystal report has recently been developed to identify outstanding reports in Tiburon and this is being incorporated into the CSTAR process.

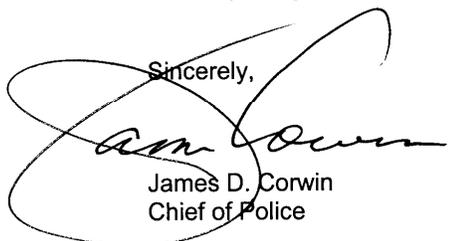
Recommendation 4: The Chief of Police should require additional training on the proper use of the ARREST tab.

Response: We agree. The use of the ARREST tab in Tiburon has created some confusion. Measures, including training, will be taken in the department to assure that all personnel understand the purpose and use of the ARREST tab.

Recommendation 5: The Chief of Police should make training for incident based reporting mandatory for police personnel.

Response: We agree. The department has provided training on incident based reporting as part of the Tiburon implementation. Obviously, the initial training was not enough. Additional training will enable police personnel to properly capture and report incident based information. The training will also further clarify the need and utility of incident based data collection and reporting.

Sincerely,



James D. Corwin
Chief of Police