



Cambridge Police Department

Effective Date: December 11, 2000

NEW POLICY # 240
Policy and Procedures

Procedure 2000-8
Revised December 11, 2000
Rescinds 98-13

EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

I. Purpose

This Procedure will:

- a.** provide general considerations and guidelines regarding the early intervention system.
- b.** establish procedures to effectively utilize the early intervention system.
- c.** explain the reasons why the early intervention system is an effective tool for supervisors.
- d.** introduces the new Departmental Return Form A P-162 and Departmental Return Form B, P-163.

II. General Considerations and Guidelines

- a.** The Cambridge Police Department is committed to providing the best service possible to its employees and the community. The recognition of job stress, performance problems and/or related symptoms is a key area in police work which can be measured and evaluated. Police departments historically have been only reactive to these symptoms focusing on incidents, but not the potential problems causing these incidents. The implementation of the Early Intervention System is designed to provide a systematic review of complaints against officers within reasonable time periods in an effort to provide commanding officers with recognition that a potential problem is developing and/or exists with an individual officer. In addition, this system has been designed to offer consistent steps of intervention intended to bring concerned recognition not only to the employee, but to his/her immediate supervisor, as well. Intervention will include counseling, retraining and psychological evaluation if warranted. It is not intended as an overall answer to problems, but rather as a tool to help supervisors and commanding officers determine if job stress or performance problems exist. The benefits of early intervention include helping officers with problems or lower skill levels, controlling complaints and increasing public confidence, getting supervisors more involved with officer development, identifying training needs and supporting termination of employees who cannot be remediated.

The core of the Early Intervention System lies within the Quality Control Section/Office of Internal Affairs. In October of 1997 the first formal computerized tracking system was implemented in the Internal Affairs Section allowing for a quick cross reference of queries which can easily determine numbers of complaints, types of complaints, involved officers, etc... within particular periods of time.

III. Procedure for Effective Utilization

- a. The following procedures have been established to effectively utilize the Early Intervention System (E.I.S.).
 1. Identification - An officer will be identified in the E.I.S. when he/she has been the subject of three complaints within any twelve month period, regardless of the investigative finding.
 2. Supervisor Counseling - Once an officer is identified, an alert letter will be forwarded to his/her commanding officer, containing information about the complaint. Included will be a Return Form A intended for the commanding officer to fill out and return to the Internal Affairs Office. Any action taken at this stage is between the commanding officer and the officer. Depending on the situation, this counseling may be the only step necessary, bringing awareness to the officer and his/her supervisor of the department's concerns. If, however, areas of concern are identified, retraining, stress management or further counseling may be offered at this time.
 3. Additional Complaints - If, within the next six months, an additional complaint is received against an officer who has become part of the E.I.S., a second stage of counseling will take place with the officer's commanding officer and the commanding officer from the Internal Affairs Section. This meeting will include identification of problem areas with referrals for a particular course of action. This course of action will include but not be limited to the following:

Supervisory Officer Responsibilities

- a. At the beginning of each tour of duty, for a minimum period of two weeks, the Supervisor will discuss specific tasks and directions for the officer to perform in order to improve his performance;
- b. If the complaints are service related, the Supervisor will respond to at least two calls for service with the officer or shortly after the officer has cleared from the call in order to evaluate the officer's performance. This will include interview of the complainant or victim.
- c. The Supervisor will document the name and address of the complainant and make an assessment of the performance by the officer.

- d. The Supervisor will monitor other activities performed by the officer in accordance with guidelines outlined by the Commanding Officer.
- e. In any case of additional supervision resulting from an employee entering into the second phase of the Department's E.I. S., the Supervisor will prepare a written report to the Commanding Officer at the end of his/her tour of duty reporting on the above two steps (a and b).

Commanding Officer Responsibilities

- f. The Commanding Officer will review the daily reports from the supervisor and at the end of each week, the Commanding Officer will meet with the officer and the supervisor. The purpose of the meeting is to review previous actions and recommend further follow-up supervision or training. This may include specific retraining, stress management classes or professional counseling. During this stage, the Return Form B will be utilized and will include a response indicating what degree of counseling and/or recommended remedial referrals were taken.

As the number of additional complaints increase, so does the remedial referral, up to and including a psychological evaluation to determine fitness for duty and/or termination from duty. However, if no additional complaints are received against an officer within the following six months of the first counseling session, the alert letter will be removed from his/her Internal Affairs file.

- 4. Remedial Action - This is the most important stage of the E.I.S. program. In order to identify potential problems and offer help to officers to enhance their performance, timely and effective training must be available. We have identified a variety of training that is available and relevant to police related duties. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, classes in Verbal Judo offered by the Massachusetts State Police. This course trains officers on tactical communications intended to instill principles and tactics which will enable the user to generate cooperation and compliance verbally under stressful conditions. Another offering comes from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Human Resource Division which offers a multitude of classes and work shops including a stress management course and programs for dealing with difficult people. Also, many private companies such as Hutchinson Law Enforcement training offer seminars in areas such as police ethics and sensitivity and body language and interviewing techniques. The International Association of Chiefs of Police is another excellent source of training opportunities. In addition, many of our own officers have vast experience in a variety of areas and may be utilized to develop relevant training programs. (33.1.5)

As areas of concern are identified, training will be selected and tailored to address problems and ultimately allow officers to perform to the best of their ability.

IV. Effective Supervisory Tool

- a.** In summary, the E.I.S., if used properly, will be an extremely effective tool for commanding officers and their supervisors. It is initiated by identifying officers who reach a pre-determined number of complaints, which in turn, may be part of a larger problem. As counseling is initiated, recognition of a potential problem is communicated to the officer and his/her immediate supervisor. If additional complaints are lodged, the remedial referrals may increase proportionately. It has been designed to help officers who are exhibiting problems or low skill levels. Therefore, confidentiality is of the utmost importance, as is the specifically tailored remedial action. It is not designed as a discipline against officers. However, resulting documentation from this program may be used to support decision making in more serious matters.

In addition, the E.I.S. gives first line supervisors a larger role in officer development, as the lines of communications are opened, as they are made part of the problem solving efforts and as they determine the level of immediate supervision necessary to ensure proper police practices.

Reports which are generated as a result of the E.I.S. identification will remain within the records of the Internal Affairs Section. However, any formal retraining or counseling will become part of an officer's personnel file.

Lastly, the remedial stages of this program are crucial. The development of this portion of the program is an ongoing process tailored to address individual needs by seeking of the best training available.

The benefits of the E.I.S. will be higher job satisfaction for department employees, as well as an increased confidence level between the community and the police that serve within it.

POLICE COMMISSIONER