

# PORTLAND POLICE:

## Improvements made to training program

June 2018



PORTLAND  
CITY AUDITOR  

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Audit Services



**Mary Hull Caballero, City Auditor**

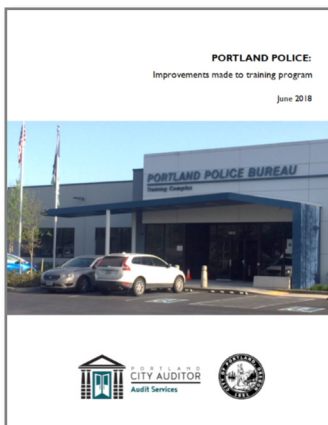
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**Cover Photo**

Audit Services Division





## SUMMARY

The Portland Police Bureau made improvements to its training program for officers since our 2015 audit. The recommendations from that audit were either implemented or in process, and in one case, no longer relevant.

Police training is an important component of ensuring public and police officer safety. Gaining and maintaining the public's trust is more likely when officers do their jobs as they should, and training helps officers keep up with the rapid pace of changes in societal, legal, and policy expectations.

In the 2015 audit, we found improvement had already been made to training since a U.S. Department of Justice report found a “pattern or practice of excessive force used against mentally ill persons” in 2012. Improving training methods was a focus of that report and a subsequent settlement agreement between the City and the Justice Department. In this follow-up report, we continued to see improvement in the training function of the Police Bureau.

We made 12 recommendations to the Bureau in the 2015 audit:

2015 Recommendation	2018 Status
<b>Training Records</b>	
Improve training database	In process
<b>Training needs assessments, evaluations, and reports</b>	
Assess training needs and outcomes and provide the Chief's Office with an improved report on the results	In process
Expand evaluations of training to include all important policy changes and Bureau initiatives	In process
Establish the Training Division as a key player in the feedback loop for assessing policy changes and effects	Implemented
Improve guidelines for training-related use-of-force reviews	Implemented
<b>Training on important topics</b>	
Provide role-playing scenarios, especially those related to managing difficult situations and people in crisis	In process
Provide refresher training on officer responsibility to procure medical care for the injured	Implemented
Train officers not to use profane or demeaning language	In process
Use actual cases as part of training for tenured officers	In process
<b>Control over weapons</b>	
Improve and make consistent across precincts weapons check-out procedures	Implemented
Improve controls over weapons and ensure accuracy of information about which weapons officers are carrying at any given time	Implemented
Provide refresher training on less-lethal weapon ammunition storage	No longer relevant



## New software on track to improve training record-keeping

**Issue:** The Bureau must track training to ensure officers and supervisors received the training they need to perform their jobs, and to know who received specialized training. In our 2015 audit we found problems with some aspects of tracking. For example, the Bureau was not able to search a database for certain types of training, especially when officers received it outside the Police Bureau. Training Division staff were also using paper rosters to enter information into the training database. We recommended that the Bureau update the training database.

**2018 Update:** Since then, the Bureau purchased a new software system and began using it in January 2018. The new system resolves some of the issues identified in the 2015 audit and has added other improvements.

For example:

- Database administrators and officers can search for all types of training by key word
- Officers can enter their own training plans into the system
- Training rosters update automatically when someone signs up for a class or changes plans
- Repeated reminders to complete required training move up an officer's chain of command until the training is completed.

A screenshot of the Portland Police Learning Management System (LMS) login page. The page features the title 'PORTLAND POLICE Learning Management System' in bold black and blue text. Below the title, it says 'Welcome to the Portland Police Learning Management System | Please Sign-in'. There is a 'Login' section with a grey header bar. Underneath, there are two input fields: 'Username:' and 'Password:'. To the left of the password field is a link for 'Forgot Password?'. To the right is a 'LOGIN' button with a blue arrow icon. At the bottom, there is a 'Need Help?' section with the email address 'LMSHelp@portlandoregon.gov'.

Source: Portland Police Bureau

Despite the improvements, some challenges remain because the software the Bureau purchased was not designed for police agencies and is not easy to customize. The Bureau is still working to keep track of officers' qualifications (such as training to use certain weapons) and to record test scores. Other issues include an inability to record all required training approvals or search the contents of lesson plans. As the Bureau continues with the implementation, it is working to resolve some of these issues. In other cases, the Training Division is developing work-arounds for issues that cannot be resolved.



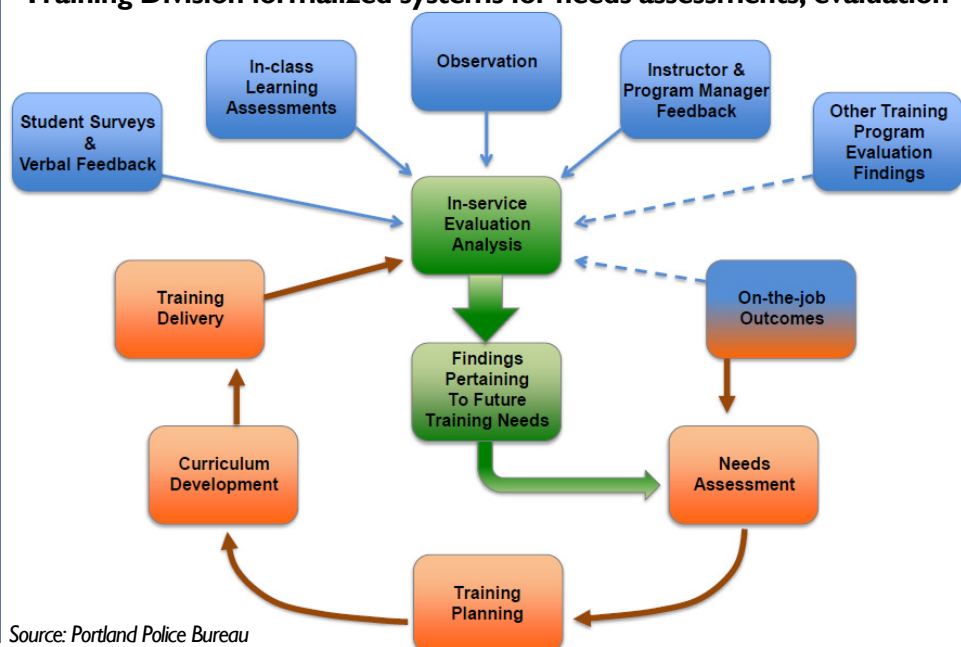
## Assessment and evaluation actions expanded

**Issue:** A well-run operation assesses what training officers need and evaluates its effectiveness. Our 2015 audit found the Bureau in the early stages of conducting formal needs assessments. At the time, the Training Division had produced one report each on the effectiveness of Crisis Intervention Training and Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training and had just hired curriculum development staff. According to the Bureau, it previously had a less extensive, more informal way of assessing training needs. The 2015 audit included recommendations related to training assessments, evaluations, and reporting to Bureau leadership. The audit also recommended that the Training Division be included in reviewing policy changes and that it make changes to how it conducts analyses for use-of-force reviews.

**2018 Update:** We found progress on all recommendations. The Training Division has developed more expertise with program evaluation and curriculum development since 2015.

The Training Division completed a needs assessment report each year since 2015, and we found that the assessments improved over time. The needs assessments now include information from best practices literature reviews and from court decisions, as well as information from analyses performed by the Bureau’s Professional Standards Division and from other sources.

### Training Division formalized systems for needs assessments, evaluation



Source: Portland Police Bureau



The needs assessment process involves coordination with multiple areas of the Bureau, as well as many others, including the City Attorney, the Department of Justice Commander and Coordinator, and the Auditor's Office Independent Police Review.

Recent needs assessments say the Training Division is studying retention rates for core skills to determine how often to offer refresher training on various topics. It is important for officers to receive training at the right intervals so they can quickly access knowledge gained at training when needed.

The Training Division also improved training evaluations, which include evaluations of Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training, changes made to Advanced Academy training, and aspects of In-Service training.

**ADVANCED ACADEMY** training is for new officers who have completed the Basic Academy training provided by the State.

**IN-SERVICE** training is ongoing training all officers receive each year.

The Bureau has completed an evaluation of the partnership between the mental health system and Police through the Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training program. The Training Division has conducted informal officer surveys to evaluate other programs, and the Chief of Police has asked that more evaluations be done in the future. Our 2015 audit recommended that the Training Division conduct program evaluations of all important policy changes and Bureau initiatives. Training Division managers said they needed more staff to do so.

Training Division managers said they plan to improve the content and format of reports about training effectiveness to the Chief of Police, and that their new training software will facilitate that. They did not have documentation of qualitative information conveyed to the Chief. The two reports the Training Division provided included information such as names of courses, course hours, and how many or which employees attended them. Continuing to improve these reports will help to fully implement the 2015 audit recommendation that reports include an assessment of how training furthers Bureau policy, goals, and objectives.





## Improvements in training on certain topics and training delivery

We also found that the Training Division conveys information to the Bureau's larger policy development team earlier in the policy development process than in the past. Combined with other changes described in this report, this satisfies our 2015 audit recommendation that the Training Division be instituted as a key player in the feedback loop when policy changes and effects are evaluated.

The Bureau improved guidelines for the Training Division's input into use of force reviews, as recommended in 2015. The audit said the Bureau's procedures were missing important elements. The Bureau updated its procedures to include all those elements.

**Issue:** Training programs should address important topics and themes thoroughly, consistently, and effectively. In 2015, we recommended the Bureau provide scenario-based training, especially focused on disengagement, confrontation management, and people experiencing a mental health crisis. At the time, the Bureau was not consistently providing scenario-based training. The audit said the Bureau had not recently offered In-Service training on getting medical care for injured subjects, and recommended the Training Division use lessons learned from actual use-of-force cases. The audit also said the Bureau should train officers not to use profane or demeaning language.

**2018 Update:** Training Division managers said there is no specific scenario-based training on disengagement, although it is covered in the concept of Crisis Intervention Training. Disengagement and de-escalation are also a focus of a scaled crisis response model the Bureau uses. Since 2014, the Bureau has had a dedicated training complex that provides a place to train officers using scenarios. The complex includes a "scenario village" which allows the Bureau to simulate real-life situations officers may find themselves in, giving them a chance to practice their skills instead of only learning them in a classroom setting. Trainers from outside agencies recently instructed Bureau training officers in focused de-escalation techniques. That training will soon be shared with officers.



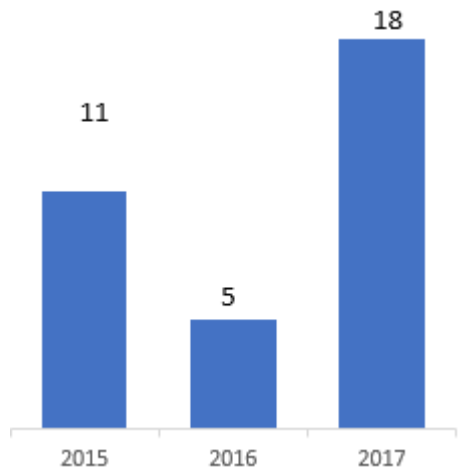
Source: Audit Services Division



We found the Bureau used scenarios in training, but not at consistent levels from year to year. Bureau managers said that scenarios are labor-intensive to plan and implement, and there have been many topics to cover since the Justice Department agreement has been in place. The Bureau also experienced turnover among several senior leaders at the Bureau in 2016, which may have been a factor. Needs assessments we reviewed said officers wanted more and better scenario-based training.

The Bureau provided more trainings on medical issues in the three years we reviewed than we found in our 2015 audit, satisfying our recommendation. Training materials used in 2017 noted that the Bureau's new use-of-force policy directs officers to ensure subjects get medical care and provide it themselves to the extent they can until help arrives. Police vehicles are now outfitted with different first aid kits than in the past, and officers are trained to be more proactive with first aid than they used to be.

**Bureau did not provide a consistent number of hours of scenario-based training**



Source: Portland Police Bureau

The Bureau made less progress on consistently telling officers not to use profanity, demeaning language, and demeaning labels. We found more evidence of this in Advanced Academy lesson plans than In-Service materials. Bureau managers said the concept is woven in to other trainings, and that the message is more explicit at Advanced Academy because that is where the Bureau teaches fundamentals to new officers. Officers only receive Advanced Academy training at the beginning of their careers. They also said they plan to do more In-Service training on the topic of respect in the context of procedural justice and implicit bias, which they said includes the concepts of respect and empathy.





## New directive and procedures guide control of weapons

Our 2015 audit recommended that the Bureau use lessons from more actual incidents in In-Service training. We did not find much evidence that this had been done. Bureau managers partly attribute that to the amount of material they need to cover during training. Managers also said it can be challenging to use real-world cases because there may be ongoing legal or disciplinary considerations; in other cases, they do not want to embarrass the officer involved, who might even be present at the training in which the incident is being discussed.

The Bureau does use actual incidents in developing needs assessments, whether on an individual basis or by studying trends. Managers said they want to use more actual cases in training, and said it is easier to do so when the incident is from another jurisdiction. A case from another jurisdiction was included in In-Service training in 2017.

**Issue:** Ensuring officers have received the appropriate training before checking out weapons from precinct armories is important for officer and public safety. Certain weapons require specialty training and are not always carried by officers. It is also important for dispatch staff and police supervisors to know who has which weapons, so that officers with those weapons can be located swiftly. The 2015 audit found that precincts had inconsistent procedures for checking out weapons and that officers did not always log into the dispatch system with weapons information, as they are required to. The audit also recommended that the Bureau provide additional refresher training on storing ammunition for less-lethal weapons. This was in response to an incident in which an officer accidentally used live ammunition in a less-lethal shotgun.

**2018 Update:** The Bureau now has an improved directive on weapons administration, and recently directed precinct commanders to develop procedures for officers to sign out non-standard weapons. Commanders were told the new procedures should direct officers to enter each of their weapons into the Police dispatch system when logging in at the start of a shift, and also direct supervisors to conduct an inventory of the armory during each shift to ensure all weapons are accounted for. Commanders were also directed to ensure the procedures require supervisors to make sure only officers who are authorized to carry particular weapons have checked out those weapons.



## Conclusion

Two of three precincts have identical procedures in place that satisfy the recommendations. The third precinct's procedures, while different from the other two, also satisfy the recommendations.

The Bureau recently transitioned to a less-lethal launcher system, which cannot be loaded with live ammunition, so the 2015 audit recommendation related to ammunition storage is no longer relevant.

Police training in Portland has undergone many changes since the Department of Justice and the City reached a settlement agreement in 2014. Police training is subject to near-constant change for other reasons too, including evolving societal expectations, court decisions, changes in Bureau leadership, and technological innovations. We found many improvements to training at the Police Bureau since we released our original audit in March 2015. In some cases, improvements were underway but not yet complete. Bureau managers said that even after the conclusion of the Justice Department agreement, they intend to continue making improvements to the training function.

## OBJECTIVE, SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

The objective of this audit was to follow up on recommendations made to the Police Bureau in the 2015 audit report: *Police Training Division: Progress made, but evaluating impacts on officer performance must be improved.*

To accomplish the audit objective we:

- Reviewed all materials related to the 2015 audit
- Reviewed the settlement agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the City of Portland, related compliance reports, and other related materials, including post-agreement consultants' reports
- Interviewed Police Bureau staff and managers, a Bureau of Emergency Communications manager, and Independent Police Review Director
- Observed the use of the Police Bureau's Learning Management System
- Reviewed documents obtained from the Police Bureau, including lesson plans, needs assessments, evaluations, scenario descriptions, directives, and standard operating procedures
- Attended the Police Bureau's fall 2017 In-Service training

# RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

Ted Wheeler, Mayor

Danielle M. Outlaw, Chief of Police

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Integrity • Compassion • Accountability • Respect • Excellence • Service

June 12, 2018

Mary Hull Caballero
City Auditor
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 140
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Auditor Caballero:

The Portland Police Bureau would like to thank the City of Portland's auditor's office for the work and time invested its audit regarding the Portland Police Bureau's Training Division. The Bureau has worked to incorporate this input into its training program. We appreciate your assessment that we have met the recommendations of the audit, and we continue to work to improve in several key areas:

- Training Records -- The new LMS system addressed the concerns the Auditor's Office identified as needing improvement. This program continues to evolve and progress toward completing all of the needs of the Training Division. One of the areas discussed in the audit and still needing improvement is the need to keep track of the officer's qualifications. We have identified a program that will integrate with the LMS system to address this problem and are in the process of receiving approval from the IT department to purchase it.
• Training needs assessments, evaluation, and reports -- We are working to continue to approve the Needs Assessment and evaluation of training. We are refining the process of developing the Needs Assessment for a better, more easily digestible assessment and training plan. The Training Division continues to incorporate feedback from students and instructors on all of our training and are learning better ways to incorporate the information learned.
• Training on important topics -- We implemented the medical response training requested by the audit and will offer refresher training in the years to come. The Training Division will offer more scenario based training in the fall 2018 in-service which will continue to use the new Critical Decision Making Model. We strive to find actual cases to create our scenarios and table top discussions.
• Control over weapons -- All of the recommendations by the 2015 audit have been implemented by the Training Division. We have completed the deployment of a new less-lethal weapons system, and have adopted consistent check-out and accounting procedures for our Precinct Armories.

The Training Division continues to evolve in the process of identifying the Bureau's training needs and delivering that training in a way that is relevant and impactful, in support of the Bureau's goal of organizational excellence. We appreciate the Auditor's input into this process. Thank you again for your office's thoughtful involvement in this ongoing effort.

Sincerely,

[Signature of Mayor Ted Wheeler]

MAYOR TED WHEELER
Police Commissioner

[Signature of Danielle M. Outlaw]

DANIELLE M. OUTLAW
Chief of Police

23474
FOR
CHIEF OUTLAW

DMO/elh/dh

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*Portland Police Bureau: Improvements made to training program*

Report #508, June 20, 2018

Audit Team: Martha Prinz

Mary Hull Caballero, City Auditor  
Kari Guy, Director of Audit Services

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