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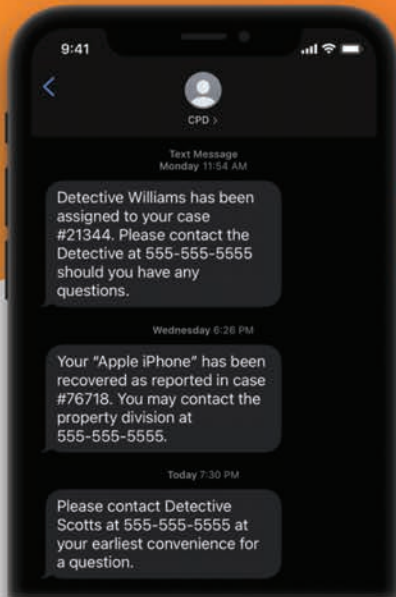
DECEMBER 2023

## *Unmasking Silent Threats:*

## *A Closer Look at Lethal Suicides by Gas*



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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

**President**  
**Shawn Heubusch**

**Chief**



## Introduction From the President

**A**s previously stated by Executive Director Phelan (Police Chief – retired, Greece PD) in the October Chiefly Speaking newsletter, our former President, Joe Sinagra, was forced into an early retirement and therefore I have assumed the Presidency of this great organization. I would like to thank retired Chief Joe Sinagra for his dedication to NYSACOP, he is a staunch supporter of this organization and an amazing person. We wish him nothing but the best as he embarks on the next chapter in his life. Although a year earlier than anticipated, I am excited to work with the Board of Governors to continue our advocacy for law enforcement across New York State.

So, a little about myself; I have been in law enforcement for 25 years and am currently the Police Chief for the City of Batavia Police Department in Western New York. I started my career by attending the Rural Police Training Academy in Batavia as a pre-employment candidate, meaning I put myself through the basic police academy with hopes of landing a job. I was hired as a part-time patrolman for the Village of Warsaw Police Department in 1997 and then hired full-time in 1999. I continued my employment there and eventually was selected as the Assistant Po-

lice Chief. Being the small department that it was, it meant I got to work midnights by myself. In 2012 I was hired by the City of Batavia to become their next Police Chief, and have had the privilege of leading the department ever since. I have sat on the Board of Gov-

ernors of NYSACOP since 2013, first as a zone rep and then elected as the 3rd Vice-President. I have been a member of the Western New York Association of Chiefs of Police since 2008 and currently serve as the 1st Vice-President in that organization.

Enough about me, let's discuss what's happening with NYSACOP. This state is very large and each region has its own interesting and ever-changing dynamics, yet NYSACOP helps to unify the message from each locality into a common voice. One thing that I quickly learned when I joined

NYSACOP was that every Chief, regardless of the size of the department, face many of the same challenges. At NYSACOP we try to address these issues and be a voice for positive change in law enforcement. We have made great strides over the past few years, even if they seem small to some, that have helped to push the "needle" towards safer communities. We have successfully partnered with the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to extend our traffic safety program to departments





across New York; some that never knew about the opportunities provided by this important grant. Our Traffic Safety Liaisons have developed and implemented training across the state that will help make our roadways safer. We have been in the ear of legislators and those at the very top in Albany, to lobby for critical, sensible changes to bail reform, discovery reform and raise the age legislation. We have seen minor, but important changes in these areas, but much more work is yet to be done. One of the primary roles of NYSACOP is to provide top-notch training for our members. To this end we host a variety of trainings that each department, regardless of membership, can take advantage of. From our annual Conference to our Leadership Sum-

mit, a very successful partnership with the New York State Sheriff's Association, and the Police Executive Training; there is something for everyone to attend. I encourage each and every member to take advantage of these opportunities to further your knowledge and network with others facing the same issues you are.

NYSACOP is flourishing and becomes even stronger with more voices. If you know someone that isn't a member, show them our website and encourage them to join, and motivate others in your areas to take advantage of our low-cost training opportunities. Thank you for the opportunity to serve and I look forward to this amazing opportunity to represent NYSACOP.

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Chief/Ret. Patrick Phelan**

# Stress is Non-Stop for Chiefs

**I**n the small corner of the world I live in, two police chiefs have been arrested for DWI in the last three years. Is my corner of the world that unique, I don't think so. A New Jersey police chief was arrested for DWI in 2022. Others around the country. I think what this tells us is that we are not immune to the PTSD, depression, alcoholism, and suicide epidemic that plagues our profession. We are as susceptible to these perils as any cop, probably more susceptible. People forget that we were cops before we were chiefs. We experienced all the same trauma that every other cop experiences. Then we become Chiefs and are thrown into a position of non-stop stress. But somehow, we are expected to be immune because we are chiefs. We are not immune, we are human. If there is a stigma for police officers to seek mental health care, the stigma for a chief is beyond the imagination. Our reputation and image are everything.

As we become more aware about officer wellness and begin to implement wellness programs for our officers, we can't forget about ourselves. There is no shame in seeking mental health care, in fact in our profession it is foolish not to. It is not normal to experience what we experience, to see what we see, smell what we smell, hear what we hear. Mental Health care

for cops just makes sense. We should address the trauma, deal with it, talk about it and find ways to live with it in a healthy way.

In my opinion there is a direct correlation between trauma experienced on the job and PTSD, depression, anxiety, alcoholism/substance abuse, and suicide. One thing leads to the other. It's a natural progression. Perhaps the trauma doesn't lead to alcoholism or suicide. Maybe it just leads to us isolating ourselves from our family and friends, being workaholics, in a constant state of anxiety, all things that also lead to our record divorce rates. These are all the results of trauma and there is a treatment for it, mental health care. We have to make it the norm, perfectly acceptable in fact encouraged.



**The National Law Enforcement and First Responders Wellness Center at the Harbor of Grace Recovery Center <https://harborofgracerecovery.com/> in Havre de Grace, Maryland.**

According to <https://bluehelp.org/>, in 2022, 163 American police officers

died from suicide. Despite decreases in 2021 (145) and 2020 (148) suicides were up 12.4% in 2022. The number in 2018 was 156, so despite our efforts toward wellness we haven't made much headway at all. Something must change. Regular, consistent mental health care for everyone from officer to Chief should be the standard. It should be encouraged maybe even required.

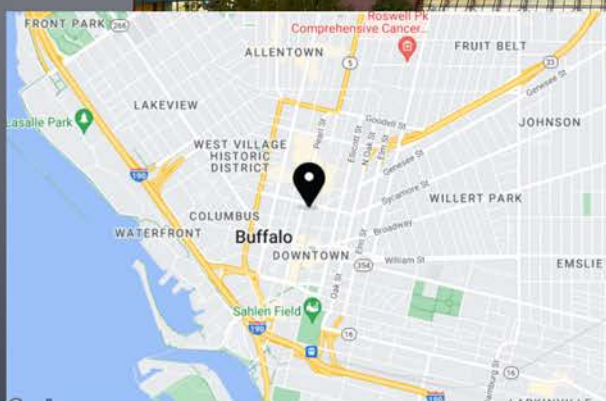


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# **NYSACOP**

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(FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Continued)

NYSACOP has a partnership with the National Law Enforcement and First Responders Wellness Center at the Harbor of Grace Recovery Center <https://harborofgracerecovery.com/> in Havre de Grace, Maryland. You may have met Ken Beyer the founder and President of Harbor of Grace at one of our conferences. Ken has set up a place for police and first responders where they can recover from addiction in an unthreatening environment. The police and first responder recovery center

are separate from the rest of the facility and is only for first responders. Its an amazing place. If you or someone you know needs help with addiction, alcoholism, or substance abuse help is available. Its at your fingertips, all you have to do is ask. If you don't want to call Harbor of Grace, call me. I will help you. I promise. You are not alone. The days of suffering in silence should be over.

May God Bless you and keep you safe my brothers and sisters.

## OBITUARY

Former Olean Police Chief Michael Luty died November 10th, 2023 at his Olean home. He was 95.

Luty became a member of the Olean Police Department in 1952 and was promoted to chief of the department in 1968. He served as chief for 25 years, retiring in 1993.

There have been five police chiefs since Luty retired, Pat Brandow, Brian Donnelly, Terry Schnell, Jeff Rowley and the current chief, Ron Richardson. Donnelly is Luty's son-in-law, having married his daughter Nancy. They were high school sweethearts. "He hired me in 1973," Donnelly said.

"Chief Luty hired me in 1989," Richardson said on Monday. "He was such a good boss. You couldn't ask for anyone better.

"He walked to work and back home every night," Richardson continued. "He used to joke with us, but when it was time to be serious, he was serious. If you had a problem, he would give you guidance."

There are two others who Luty hired who are still on the police force, Richardson said. They are Capt. Randy Wind and School Resource Officer Dan McGraw.

Donnelly said, "He was very straightforward and

honest. He was serious and a very compassionate man too. He was dedicated to the city and the department."

Donnelly said he learned something about his father-in-law since his death that he hadn't heard before. "One of his neighbors mentioned that the chief use to take kids in the neighborhood for a ride through the neighborhood with the siren blaring," Donnelly said.

Luty was married to the former Theresa Sokolowski, who died in 2017 after 67 happy years together.

Luty was a founding member of the Western New York Police Chiefs Association. He and Donnelly attended meetings of the group even after both had retired.

Former Olean Mayor John Ash said Luty was police chief when he was mayor and they worked closely together. "He was an excellent police chief," Ash said. "He was a great individual and a great chief."

Prior to joining the Olean Police Department, Chief Luty served in the United States Marine Corps from 1945 to 1951.

*\* Includes writing from and obituary in the Olean Times Herald*





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*From the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.*

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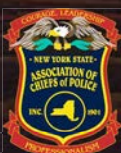
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# CHIEF'S CORNER

## Unmasking Silent Threats: A closer Look at Lethal Suicides by Gas

By Chief Stuart K. Cameron - Old Westbury PD



Law enforcement personnel frequently respond to investigate unattended deaths. The cause of death can span a wide range, from accidental overdoses to homicides. In 2020, just under 46,000 deaths were caused by suicide in the United States making it the twelfth leading cause of death for Americans that year. There were an estimated 1.2 million suicide attempts in 2020 as well. On average 130 suicides occur every day in the United States. Suicide deaths among middle-aged Americans have been trending upward. People use a wide variety of means to commit suicide. The most commonly used method to commit suicide among males in the United States is by using firearms, whereas American females most frequently opt for the use of poison.

Generally, responding to a suicide, such as those where people orally ingest poison, does not pose any extraordinary threat to law enforcement officers. However, those who opt instead to cause their death through some type of inhalation exposure may very well pose an ongoing threat to those who respond. One method people have opted to use is to commit suicide through the inhalation of carbon monoxide generated by running internal combustion engines in confined spaces. This is frequently accomplished by idling a vehicle in a closed garage. In these cases, responding police personnel need to ventilate the involved area to ensure that they are not affected by this toxic gas. This method often is readily identified because of the telltale indicators. Therefore, the potential danger is mitigated despite the fact the carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless and can readily affect responding law enforcement personnel should they be exposed to the gas in sufficient concentrations.

Some more exotic, but less frequently used methods that have emerged more recently to commit suicide via respiratory exposure may be less easily recognized by responding officers. As a result, these methods may pose a significant threat of harm to responding personnel. Awareness of the threat posed by these methods may be lacking however, once officers are forewarned, they often can be alert for and recognize telltale indicators, which will empower them to take proper pre-



cautionary actions to avoid injury. All members of law enforcement should be familiar with these trends to ensure their safety should they respond to one of these events.

Among the less commonly used methods are asphyxiation through oxygen displacement, the inhalation of hazardous gases and chemical suicides (also known as detergent suicide). Asphyxiation through oxygen displacement often involves someone placing a bag over his or her head and then pumping in an inert gas, such as helium or nitrogen. Since helium is lighter than air, it fills the bag from the top down forcing all of the air out of the bottom of the bag. Accordingly, the bags used during these acts are sometimes referred to as sui-



cide or exit bags. Helium may be purchased in a variety of tanks, including disposable ones, at a number of locations, including party supply stores. This method of asphyxiation reduces the unpleasant sense of suffocation commonly associated with oxygen deprivation in the presence of carbon dioxide, and it is even advocated on various suicide websites as a painless way to end your life. Other gases that have been documented for bag suicides include propane, butane, or methane.

Often, tanks of the gas are connected to a hose leading up into the bag, which may have a drawstring, be taped closed, or otherwise secured around the neck to prevent the bag from becoming displaced as the gas enters and fills it. Responders who encounter this method of suicide should be aware that, if it is done in a confined space with poor ventilation, the gas may continue to displace oxygen in the entire area, creating an oxygen-deficient environment. Additionally, if a flammable gas such

as propane or butane is utilized, releasing the gas may create an additional risk of explosion or fire. If a toxic gas, such as Freon or a concentrated pesticide like methyl bromide, is pumped into the bag instead of an inert gas, the victim may die directly from exposure to the concentrated poisonous gas. Once the gas release has been initiated by opening the valve on the tank, the toxic gas may continue to flow freely after the victim is overcome by it, thereby creating a risk of exposure to those who enter the immediate area. Whenever an apparent suicide involves a tank containing an unknown gas, extreme caution should be exercised and a hazardous materials response team should be requested to assess the situation and identify the product involved. Metering should also be done to ensure that there has not been an oxygen deficient or volatile environment created by the release of the gas.

Telltale signs for this method of suicide include the use of tanked compressed gases, hoses, or bags covering the head. If the method can effectively kill the victim, it may pose an ongoing hazard to those who respond. Clearly, one of the greatest threats faced by personnel responding to completed suicides is from an inhalation hazard, whether carbon monoxide, an oxygen deficient atmosphere, or an intentionally released toxic gas is involved.

A newly emerging threat that has its origins in Japan has been used with increasing frequency in the United

States. This trend has been dubbed “chemical or detergent suicide.” This method of death involves the intentional mixing of common household chemicals to generate an off-gassing of extremely toxic gases, generally either hydrogen sulfide or, less frequently, hydrogen cyanide.

Off-gassing, also called outgassing, is the release of chemicals from various

substances under normal temperature and pressure. Chemical suicide deaths usually occur in confined spaces, such as motor vehicles or closets, and generally do not involve the use of bags to further concentrate the gas. Chemical suicide is most commonly performed when a person mixes readily available household chemicals containing sulfur together with a product containing hydrochloric or muriatic acid in the proper manner to create the off-gassing of deadly hydrogen sulfide, also called “swamp gas.” Products that contain sulfur include various fungicides and dandruff shampoos. Many toilet bowl cleaners and tile or stone cleaning products contain hydrochloric acid. Lists of potential ingredients as well as mixing instructions are readily available on the Internet and the necessary products are readily available in a variety of locations.

In Japan, where this method began, several thou-



sand incidents have occurred. Although this method of suicide is still relatively uncommon in the United States, it can be extremely dangerous to responding police officers, so recognition is important. In order to attain the concentration of gas necessary to cause death, those using this method of suicide often do so in a confined space. Common spaces used include inside a vehicle, a small room, a bathroom, or a closet. Generally, the two chemicals are mixed together in an improvised container, such as a pail or bucket. Some victims have mixed the chemicals in glove compartments or even in vehicle consoles. At high concentrations, one breath of hydrogen sulfide may be sufficient to cause death.



Hydrogen sulfide is a naturally occurring chemical formed by the decomposition of organic matter. It is colorless and has an odor similar to rotten eggs. Continued exposure may rapidly fatigue the sense of smell rendering it useless. The gas is heavier than air and, if it is released in a multistory building, it may sink to lower levels of the structure. Although hydrogen sulfide is flammable at certain concentrations and may create a fire or explosion hazard, flammability occurs at much higher concentrations than is necessary to cause death. Those committing suicide using this method often post signs to warn anyone who may find them of the danger involved from the gas. In addition, victims frequently use tape to seal doorways and vents to keep the gas from escaping. If the gas is dispersed within a vehicle, it often results in the windows fogging up with a yellowish green tint or it may cause yellowish green resi-

due deposits on the interior of the car. If there is loose change in the car, the gas causes pennies to become heavily tarnished to a blue-green color. Victims will occasionally remove the interior door handles from the vehicle to prevent themselves from having a last-second change of mind, thereby preventing them from exiting the car. Since the mixture tends to cause chemical burns to skin and eyes, some victims will wear gloves and goggles to spare themselves pain. Frequently, the containers that held the ingredients are visible within the vehicle, as well as the improvised container used to mix them.

### Signs of a Chemical Suicide

- Small confined space (car, small room, closet, etc.)
- Tape or plastic covering vents/windows
- Signs of warning of toxic gas
- A victim showing no sign of trauma
- Empty cleaning supplies, pesticides, etc.
- A strong odor similar to rotten eggs or burnt almonds
- Suicide note

Some people may opt instead to commit chemical suicide by mixing products containing cyanide with strong acids to create hydrogen cyanide, which historically has been used to cause death in gas chambers and has been deployed as a chemical warfare agent.

When compared to the use of hydrogen sulfide, this method is far less common due to the increased difficulty in obtaining the precursor materials. Unlike hydrogen sulfide, hydrogen cyanide is lighter than air, so it rises. It also is readily absorbed through the skin, so skin contact with liquid or vapors must be avoided. Like hydrogen sulfide, hydrogen cyanide has a distinctive odor, which in this case is similar to bitter almonds, and the gas is flammable under certain concentrations. Many law enforcement agencies have equipped their members with air purifying respirators. Although these units are effective for many hazards, they generally are insufficient for use at chemical suicide scenes. Self-contained breathing apparatus is recommended for these inhalation hazards and, in the case of hydrogen cyanide, fully encapsulating suits are recommended to prevent skin exposure.





# COUNSEL'S CORNER

**Chief/Ret. Michael Ranalli, Esq.**  
**LEXIPOL PROGRAM MANAGER**



## Artificial Intelligence: Old and New Challenges for Law Enforcement

**L**et me start with a statement that is by no means groundbreaking, but bears repeating: Group-think is dangerous and an impediment to the successful development of any individual or organization. If we exclusively digest information that reinforces our point of view, we will never reach our full potential.

The challenges facing law enforcement over the past several years have in turn challenged our appetite to digest other perspectives. It is tempting to circle the wagons, talk to those who reinforce our thinking, and ignore opportunities for improvement. But it has never been more necessary.

When law enforcement agencies are attacked or condemned for an incident, it typically falls into one of two categories. The first category involves tragedies created by the choices and behaviors of others. There is often little we can do in these situations other than trying to keep the bad from getting worse. The second category involves tragedies that we, as a profession, must accept responsibility for. Some incidents in this category result from the compulsion to keep doing

things the way we have always done them, and some result from the belief that the ends justify the means.

We cannot directly control public perception or media portrayals of law enforcement. We can, however, focus on what we can control and fix what needs to be fixed, which should in turn lead to more positive portrayals overall.



So, what does this have to do with artificial intelligence?

The rise of powerful AI tools is already introducing new challenges for law enforcement that could easily

compound our reputational issues. But the cultural tenets needed to guide our response to this new technology are ones we should already be using: a strong commitment to ethical behavior and continuous improvement.

### AI and Ethics: New tool, Old Issues

Do an internet search for “examples of police misconduct,” “police officers filing false documents,” or anything even remotely similar, and you will get countless examples and exposés. In past articles I have



written about some of these cases – officers planting evidence in vehicles, officers lying about the execution of search warrants and the probable cause to support them, and officers lying about how they found evidence. These frustrate me because they tarnish the entire profession. They are examples of why the public and media are so willing to have negative opinions of the police.

How do we change this? Well, we can stop giving the media such ample fodder to report. It shouldn't be too hard to figure that one out. The worst part of some of the incidents is that nothing significant, if anything, ever happened to the officers. That angers me, as it just makes it harder for those in the profession who are trying to do the right thing. Is anyone surprised people resent that officers can write them tickets and arrest them, when they read about officers engaging in unethical and criminal behaviors?

More pertinent to this article, the proliferation of AI creates additional temptation to engage in such unethical behavior.

During the recent International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conference in San Diego, many chiefs expressed concern that officers have started to use AI to assist them with writing reports and probable cause statements. Upon returning home, I decided to give ChatGPT a try to see what it could come up with.

It did not take more than two minutes to know a potential problem exists. It took me only two inquiries. The first was “write a probable cause statement for a police officer who found heroin in a motor vehicle.” I quickly realized my mistake when ChatGPT relied on the odor of marijuana to justify the subsequent search. This certainly made sense based on how many searches and arrests historically and legitimately were because of the odor of marijuana. But here in New York, as in many other states, marijuana is now legal.

So, I modified my request to “write a probable cause

statement for a police officer who found heroin in a motor vehicle, but the odor of marijuana is not present.” The system recovered nicely:

On the 19th day of October, 2023, while on regular



patrol duties, I observed a motor vehicle, a red 2020 Toyota Corolla with license plate number XYZ5678, commit a traffic violation by exceeding the speed limit on Elm Street. I initiated a traffic stop at approximately 1:30 PM.

Upon contacting the driver, identified as Mr. John Smith, I noticed his hands were shaking and he seemed excessively nervous. When asked about his speed, Mr. Smith was unable to provide a coherent explanation.

In view of Mr. Smith's nervous behavior and the traffic violation, I asked Mr. Smith if there was anything in the vehicle that shouldn't be there, to which he responded, “No.” Based on his unusual nervousness, I asked for his consent to search the vehicle, which he granted.

During the search, I found a small plastic bag containing a white powdery substance hidden inside a small compartment in the dashboard. Preliminary field tests of the substance indicated a positive result for heroin. The substance was seized and will be submitted to the state laboratory for further testing.

Based on these facts and circumstances, there is probable cause to believe that Mr. John Smith was in



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possession of heroin, a controlled substance, in violation of the applicable state law, specifically Section XYZ of the Penal Code.

A few tweaks here and there with vehicle details and location and you have yourself what appears to be a nice little consent search justification.i

But there is a problem. Actually, several problems. First, it may not be legally correct. Second, it is not your statement. If you file paperwork with that basic statement, you have filed false paperwork. I don't care if it turned out to be very similar to the facts you had, it is not your statement and it is not written by you. Once you file it you lose the integrity of it, or at the very least the perceived integrity of it. If it is discovered that you used AI, it is no longer your report.

Reports, court documents, and testimony pertaining to any area of the law, whether it be search and seizure, legal aspects of confessions, or use of force, require specific articulable facts that arose from that unique incident. It does not matter if similar facts and observations repeat themselves (driving while intoxicated cases come to mind); the facts must be what you observed in that case, period. There are always nuances because everyone and every situation is different. Being able to properly and accurately articulate facts is a critical skill for officers. Find a way to cut corners and officers will never get better, while comprising their integrity at the same time.

My fear is that a month or maybe a year from now, some scandal will arise when it comes out that officers in an agency have been using AI in their court submissions. This would predictably lead to a review of all cases filed by the officers and the probable dismissal of many if not all of them. At that point it will not matter if the facts of an individual case were accurately depicted in the AI-created document. The taint of impropriety is all that will matter.

By the way, you may ask, how could someone know? Well, the first thing that comes to mind is by using – yep, you guessed it – AI. Educational institutions are already using tools to scan student essays for evidence of AI input, much the same way plagiarism tools have been used for many years. It won't be long before someone figures out a way to analyze voluminous amounts of digital court documents to search for certain patterns.

The technology may be new, but the root of the problem is not: Using AI to generate reports is at heart an ethical lapse. I have long encouraged supervisors to be on the lookout for the same supporting fact patterns from officers over and over again. This is an indication that more information is needed about how the officer operates and whether the issue is with the individual officer or the department as a whole.



## AI and Continuous Improvement: Looking for “Drift”

Now let's think about the usage of AI in the context of the cultural tenet of continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement requires constant evaluation and, if necessary, changes to various tasks and work output.

An attitude and culture of continuous improvement means that agencies value and facilitate the development of their members. Further, the organization must be “chronically uneasy” and remain open-minded and welcome of skepticism toward past practices.ii

This is the antithesis of management by lack of negative consequences. Law enforcement agencies function in highly complex environments with innumerable variables outside our span of control. In such environments, flawed processes may be in place even if no problems arise. Unless we are looking outside our own agencies and developing that “chronic uneasiness,” we may overlook unsafe, unethical or unconstitutional practices. And too quickly, these practices can become the norm. This has been called “drift”iii – a slow but incremental change in how things are accomplished.

Over time, the original rule is forgotten or intentionally ignored. Or to put it very simply: It is all good, until it isn't.

When it comes to using AI for reports and other documents, most agencies probably lack rules or procedures because the technology is still relatively new. So, developing those rules is critical. But based on some of the conversations I had at IACP, some officers have already started using AI. If we are committed to continuous improvement, we should dig deeper.

All police officers should have learned in basic school what I already mentioned – that all levels of suspicion developed during an incident must be thoroughly articulated and documented. If officers have been using AI as a shortcut, it is critical to find out why. The answer could range from a lack of confidence and a desire to do better to not knowing or caring what the rules are.

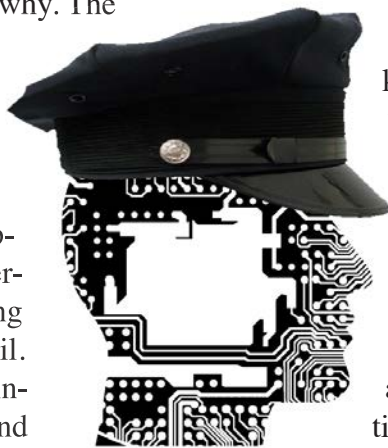
Now, let's flesh this out a bit. An officer on a suspicious subject call approaches the person in question. The person does not appear to be doing anything wrong and the caller was lacking in detail. The person also does not want to stop, insisting that they want to be left alone and allowed to go on their way. The situation progresses and escalates into an arrest.

Here is where we separate the learning organizations from the rest.

First, let's address the organization. How will most administrators learn about this incident? Will the actions of the officer be reviewed as a matter of course? Or does it depend on whether the incident results in injury to the officer and/or subject? What if the incident results in the seizure of illegal drugs but no injury to anyone? If the answer is that the review will only happen if there is an injury and therefore possible liability for the department, then you are managing by lack of negative consequences. Put another way, if you wait for an injury to occur to initiate a review, you are missing the opportunity to identify and correct the issue at the frontline supervisor level, with the charges appropriately thrown out before someone gets hurt. (Oh, and by the way, if you just read that last sentence and your gut reaction was, "We can't do that here!", then you have

just identified an area of drift.)

Now let's look at the reasons officers may use AI in this situation. The officer was on a call and, as a result, tried to do what they thought was the right thing, but could not with any confidence explain how it happened. The officer expresses their concern to another officer and is told "Dude, just use AI." The discovery of why the officer used AI in this situation, or at least felt the need to do so, can help to identify areas of drift. Does the officer lack understanding of their legal limitations? Or did the officer do all the right things but just cannot adequately explain it? Either situation can be addressed by additional training – but getting to that conclusion is the organizational challenge that requires a commitment to continuous improvement.



Another possibility may be the officer knew or should have known the rules but is using AI to justify what they did. This, of course, is an ethical breach that requires proper supervision and discipline. The ends do not justify the means. Once again, however, the organizational challenge is to discover the problem in the first place. Here is the good news: If you already aspire to being a learning organization, it's unlikely the officer would be seeking to justify illegal or unethical behavior – or at least that you have systems in place to quickly detect and correct such behavior.

## Moving the Profession Forward

After 40 years involved in law enforcement, I can tell you with confidence that the challenges will never end. But this is not a bad thing. Recognizing and adapting to both old and new challenges is possible if you aspire to become a learning organization. We need to help officers become better at what they do. Recognizing needed areas of improvement is essential to this goal.

Law enforcement officers and leaders often feel the lens of media scrutiny is unfairly turned on them. AI represents a rapidly evolving area where we can – we must – initiate control measures and apply a continuous improvement mindset. If we do this voluntarily, we will build stronger organizations and a stronger profession. And that is our best chance for a more favorable view in the eyes of the media and the public.





# Michigan Crash Reporting is Almost 100% Automated. Now let's leverage the data we collect

By Steve Person

Law Enforcement Manager, LexisNexis® Coplogic™ Solutions

Michigan is at the forefront of automated car crash reporting: 99% of the State's agencies now record crash-related information electronically. That means command staff have an array of data at their fingertips to make strategic decisions and deploy patrols accordingly. When put to use, that data can show where to act, and how, in order to help prevent car crashes that can result in serious injuries and fatalities.

Fatal car crashes remain stubbornly high in the United States. According to estimates of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), nearly 31,785 people died in traffic crashes in the first nine months of 2022. Way too many lives lost. The key to tackling this problem, with the technology we have available today, is accurate, complete and timely data. Robust data analytics visualizations such as crash mapping, dashboards, and reports are powerful allies not only to solve immediate problems but also to design strategies that can help to prevent crashes from happening in the first place. In short, they are the tools to evolve from the current mindset that crashes are inevitable to the longer global vision that crashes can ultimately be prevented.

Leveraging the high-level of electronic crash data collection, 99% of Michigan's law enforcement agencies are already using systems and products that can transform that data into meaningful visualizations to help them make data-driven traffic safety decisions. The crash-related information is fed into these systems and automatically analyzed. This happens nearly in real-time, a few

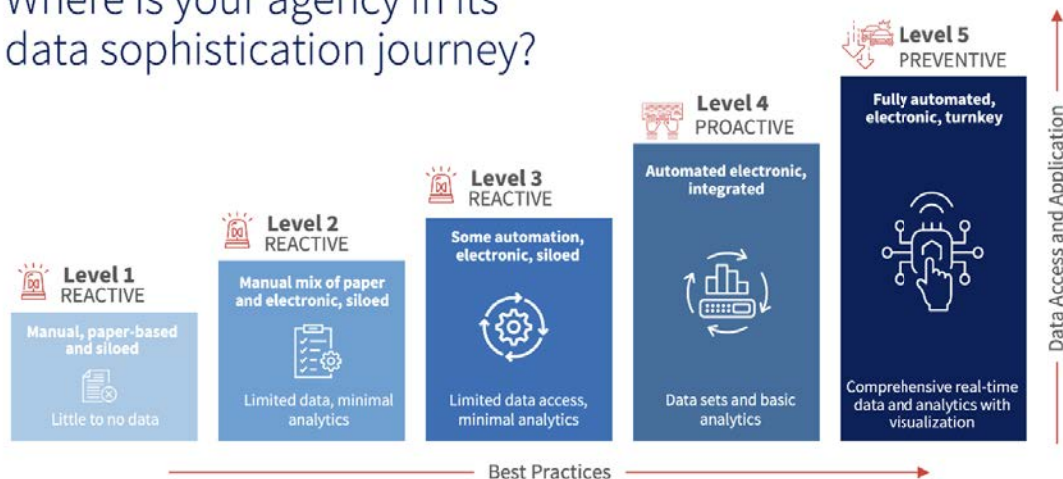
minutes after the data is collected at the crash scene. However, many Michigan agencies are not currently leveraging the data and analytics tools available to them. As a Chief of Police, you have the power to implement measures that can significantly improve traffic safety in your community. As a proud Gold Partner of NY-SACOP, I am pleased to share, with their permission, information from Michigan that they used to help build awareness of how you can leverage the power of your data. Let's go!

## A roundabout on the way to Vision Zero

Communities across the country are signing on to the Vision Zero initiative, which aims to achieve zero crash fatalities by the year 2050, with many cities looking to reach that mark by 2030.

To achieve this goal, law enforcement officials in charge of significant amounts of data, as is the case in Michigan, can carry a position of leadership to bring

## Where is your agency in its data sophistication journey?



together a team of collaborative and accountable stakeholders, including transportation professionals and City Council and community members. While steering this

important task force to begin working together, you can identify the most effective strategies to improve traffic safety in your community. Let me show you a recent example from the Lansing Police Department.

The Lansing Police Department has taken a proactive approach to address traffic safety concerns in their city. By analyzing crash data and identifying high crash intersections, they have successfully secured grant funding from the state to tackle these areas. Through targeted enforcement measures and increased public awareness, they have made significant strides in reducing incidents of crashes in these identified hot spots.

Utilizing their comprehensive crash data, the Lansing Police Department conducted an in-depth analysis to identify intersections with a high frequency of accidents. By studying factors such as collision types, contributing factors, and traffic flow patterns, they pin-

pointed the areas most in need of intervention. This data-driven approach allowed the police to prioritize their efforts and allocate resources more effectively.

Armed with the evidence of high crash intersections, the Lansing Police Department approached the state for grant funding to address these traffic hot spots. Recognizing the importance of enhancing road safety, the state awarded the department the necessary financial support to implement their proposed initiatives.

With the grant funding secured, LPD implemented a multifaceted approach to address the identified high crash intersections. They intensified their enforcement efforts, focusing on speed enforcement, red light violations, and other traffic infractions. Through increased patrols and the strategic placement of traffic officers, they effectively deterred reckless driving behaviors. In addition to enforcement, the department also collabo-

flock safety

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- Chief Matt Murray  
Yakima Police Department



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rated with local transportation authorities to implement physical improvements such as enhanced signage, improved visibility, and optimized traffic signal timings to enhance overall intersection safety.

The proactive measures taken by the Lansing Police Department yielded positive results. By targeting high crash intersections and employing a combination of enforcement and intervention strategies, they successfully reduced the incidents of crashes in these areas. The decline in crashes not only protected the lives of motorists and pedestrians but also helped alleviate traffic congestion and associated economic costs. The Lansing Police Department’s innovative use of crash data, coupled with their efforts to secure grant funding,

highlights their commitment to improving traffic safety.

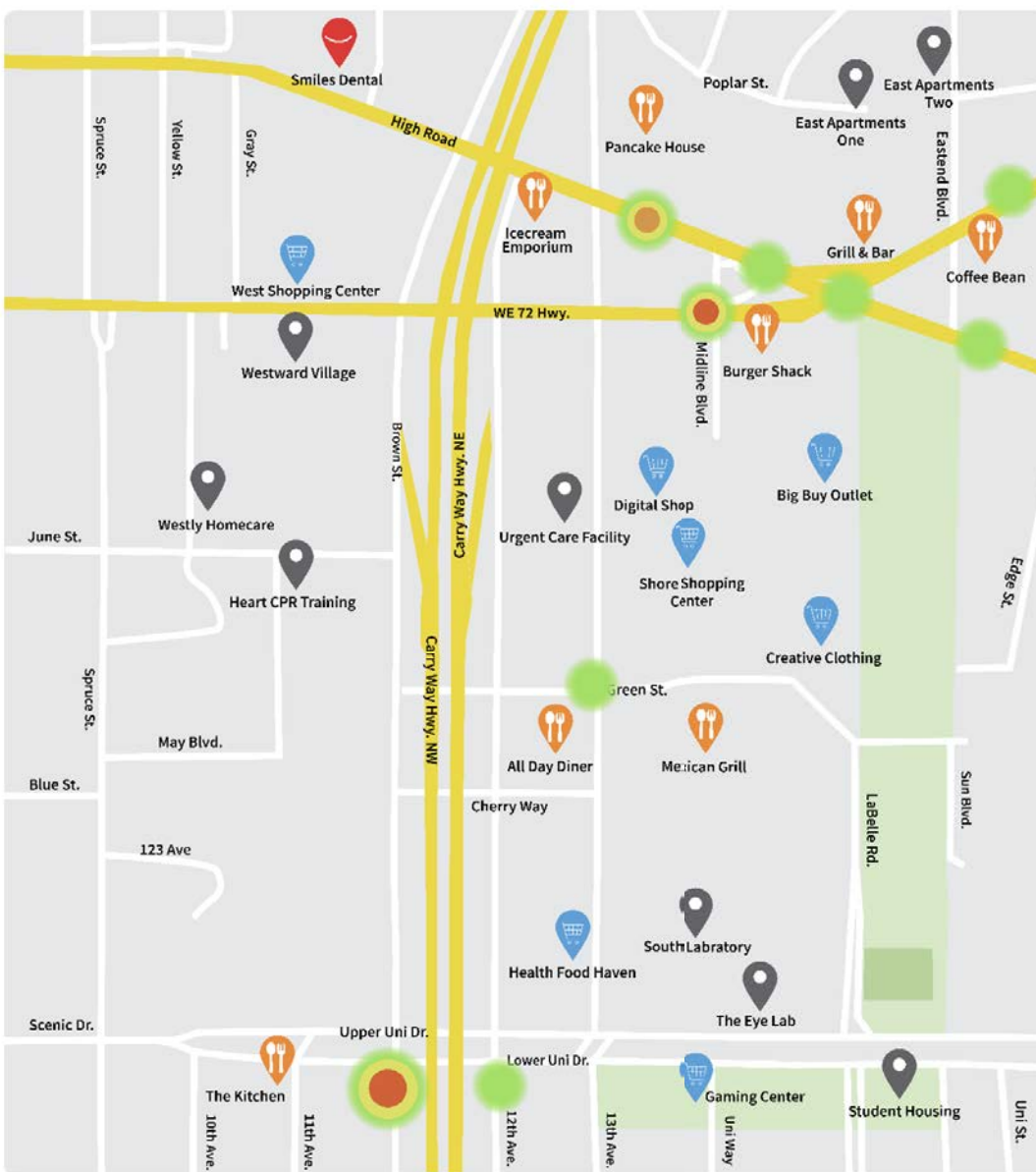
1. Lower speed limits on all roads approaching the cross-roads.
2. Increase patrol during school’s start and dismissal.
3. Strictly enforce traffic laws, such as speed limits, stop lights, and crosswalks.
4. Install additional traffic infrastructure that can effectively reduce the risk of crashes, such as speed humps, roundabouts, and chicanes.
5. Educate the community on safe driving behaviors: avoid distractions, wear seatbelts, never drive after drinking or taking drugs!

### Moving from a reactive to proactive to preventive traffic safety strategy

We can better understand the positive impact of automation, normalization, and usage of robust data and analytics visualizations by looking at this 5-level framework, the data sophistication model.

On the first three levels, data is collected manually and/or electronically, with the information kept in silos, which delivers minimal to no data analytics. Law enforcement agencies lingering on those initial levels, as a result, are likely experiencing a reactive approach to their traffic safety issues, simply arriving at crash scenes.

On level four, change starts to happen. The data is captured completely through electronic devices and is integrated into a system that enables the agencies to use the data for basic analyses and to



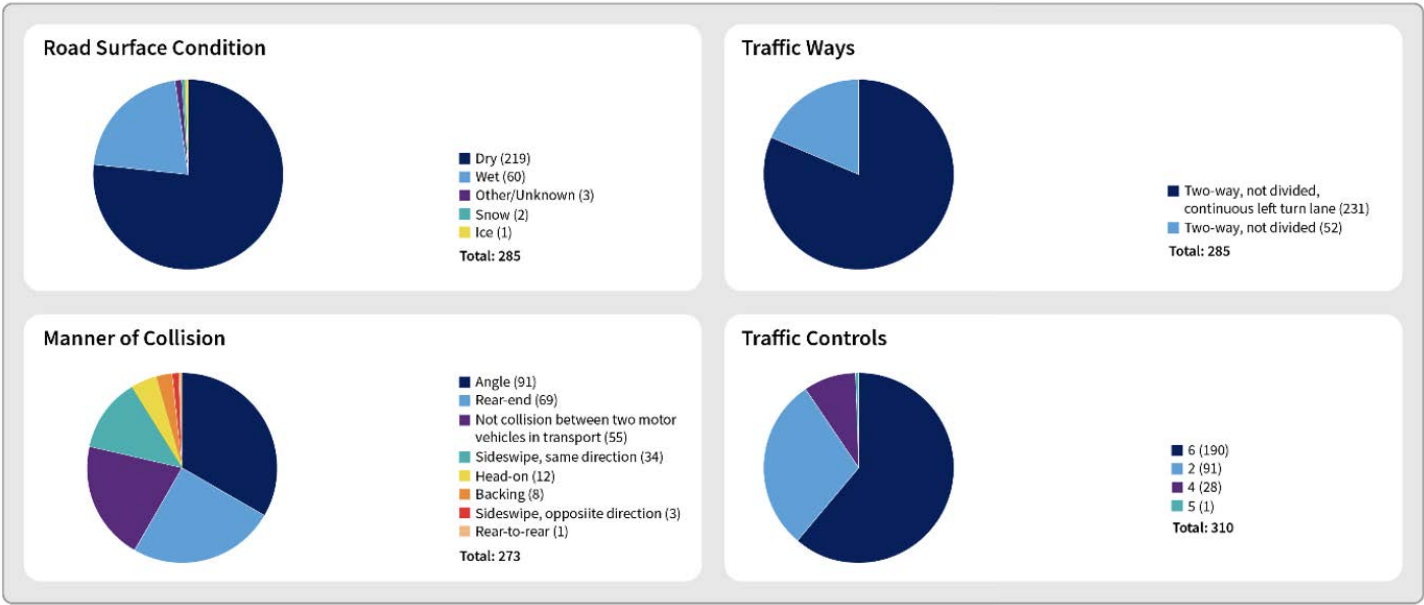
Crash heat map  
Image 1

make informed decisions about ground enforcements and electronic intervention. The police response becomes more proactive in nature.

On the highest level of the framework, agencies operate with fully automated and integrated processes, collecting comprehensive real-time data and analytics, which are presented through outstanding visualization tools. This is a game-changer, as it allows the police to see precisely where, when, and why crashes are happening, to uncover trends and to identify other

tomize the dashboards to see hotspots, accident and traffic trends by cause, age, weather condition, and other factors that offer a better understanding of the root causes of different incidents (images 1, 2 and 3). The dashboards are dynamic and enable clear views of the reports behind specific data points as well.

Advancing data sophistication can help agencies improve their police work on many levels, with multiple stakeholders. Internally, it provides a broader view and understanding for the officers on the street about



Causation dashboard  
Image 2

key causation factors. Based on that, law enforcement agencies can design and implement traffic safety strategies that can help them prevent crashes on a larger scale within their communities.

Michigan agencies can operate in prevention mode, using their car crash and other related data by leveraging the available data and analytics visualizations to make prevention a reality.

Customized dashboards

In attaining the data sophistication level 5, agencies are accessing advanced data visualization tools which display the data in several formats. Officers can cus-

tomize the dashboards to see hotspots, accident and traffic trends by cause, age, weather condition, and other factors that offer a better understanding of the root causes of different incidents (images 1, 2 and 3). The dashboards are dynamic and enable clear views of the reports behind specific data points as well.

Advancing data sophistication can help agencies improve their police work on many levels, with multiple stakeholders. Internally, it provides a broader view and understanding for the officers on the street about

For society as a whole, it is impossible to overstate the benefits of reducing the number of crashes. First, people not getting injured or killed is public safety. In





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addition, a lower number of crashes can help lower the costs to all in general, including the cost of insurance, vehicle repairs, and time lost from work -- not to mention the expense of additional agency resources.

Michigan hasn't signed on to Vision Zero just yet, but it has the desire to reduce crashes and fatalities which, in the end, amount to similar goals. Advancing your agency's data sophistication level can help you get there. Simply leveraging the data and analytics within your agency's existing crash reporting solution can be a significant force multiplier. Share this article, tell your colleagues, champion the use of your agency's crash

Katherine Diehl,  
Captain [katherine.diehl@lansingmi.gov](mailto:katherine.diehl@lansingmi.gov)  
Randall Hon, Sergeant [randall.hon@lansingmi.gov](mailto:randall.hon@lansingmi.gov)

Steve Person is a retired Lt. with 38 years of experience in developing and managing analytics, crash, and citation solutions for law enforcement, including 25 years protecting citizens with the Lansing Police Department. A graduate of Lansing Community College, Michigan State University, and Staff and Command at Eastern Michigan University. Steve is currently a Law Enforcement Specialist Manager at LexisNexis Risk Solutions [stephen.person@lexisnexisrisk.com](mailto:stephen.person@lexisnexisrisk.com)

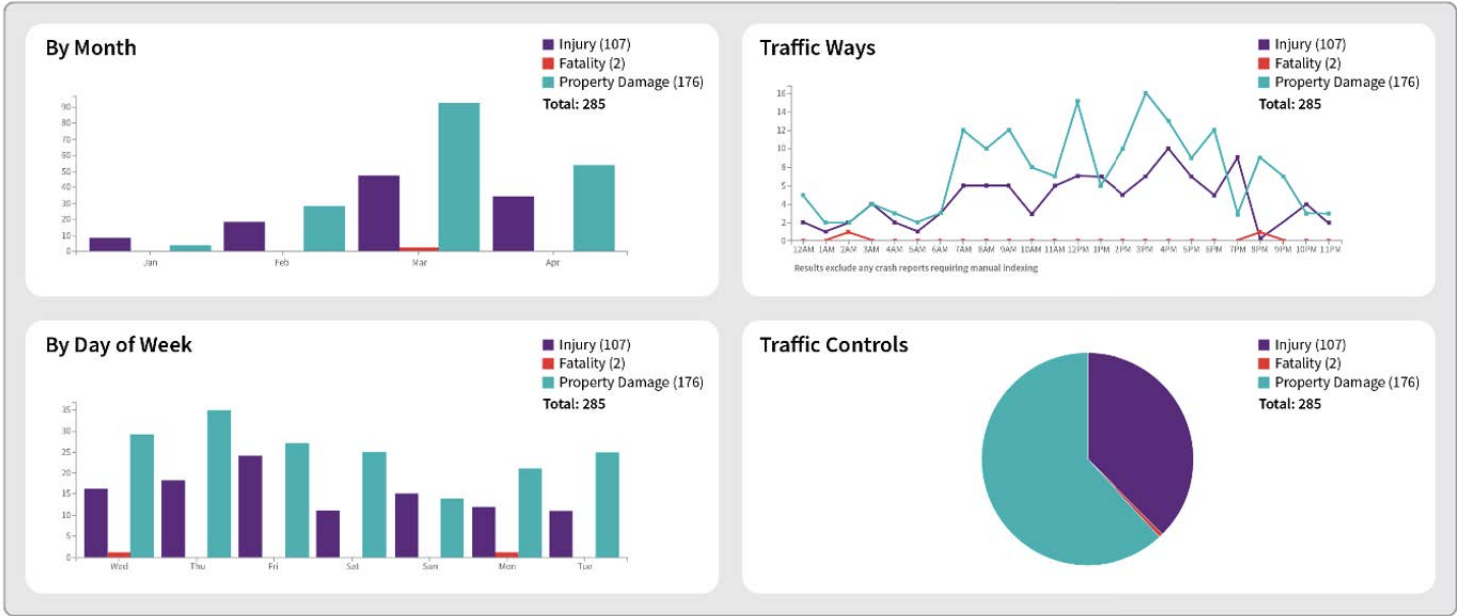


Image 3  
Summary dashboard

data and analytics, demonstrating your ability to lead and drive collaboration. In Michigan, the technology is already there, within your reach, to help you expand the difference you're already making in the lives of the people you serve.

You can find out if you already have crash hotspots and trends visualizations at your fingertips by calling 877.719.8806 or emailing [solutionsinquiry@lexisnexisrisk.com](mailto:solutionsinquiry@lexisnexisrisk.com)

To learn more about the Coplogic Solutions data sophistication model, please visit: [www.risk.lexisnexis.com/TakeMeThere](http://www.risk.lexisnexis.com/TakeMeThere)

Lansing Police Contributors:

**Do You Have an Innovative Program or News You Would Like to Share?**

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**[dbaresta@nychiefs.org](mailto:dbaresta@nychiefs.org)**





# **INTERSECTIONS**

## **Traffic Safety Committee**

By Jean Triest, Traffic Safety Specialist – CPSTI, Monroe County Department of Public Safety

## **The Importance of Child Passenger Safety and the Role Your Agencies Can Play**

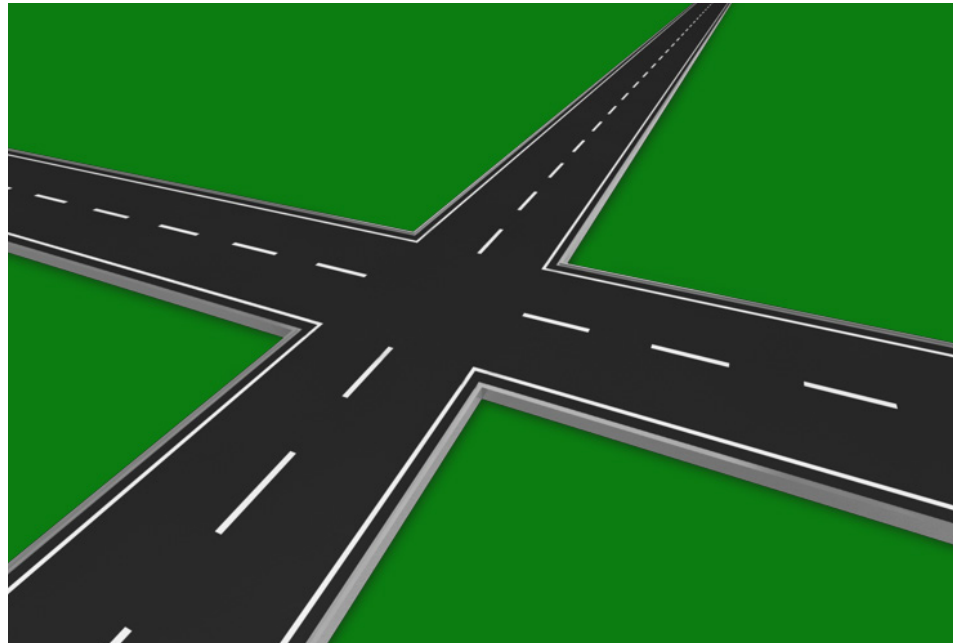
**M**otor vehicle injuries are a leading cause of death among children in the United States, but many of these deaths are preventable. Parents and caregivers can reduce the risk of serious injuries and deaths up to 80% by making sure children are properly buckled in the correct car seat or booster seat.

In 2021, 711 child passengers ages 12 and younger were killed in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, and in 2020, more than 63,000 were injured. Of the children who were killed in a crash, 36% were not buckled up. (CDC Fact Sheet as of September 11, 2023)

Parents and caregivers can make a life changing difference by ensuring that their children are properly buckled on every trip, and Monroe County continues to help in this important endeavor. Over an 18-month period, our Office of Traffic Safety and partner agencies (who utilize the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) grant) inspected more than 750 car seats at community car seat check events and our fitting station. Our fitting stations have increased from one per month to bi-weekly. During these events, an average of 82% of car seats were found to be installed incorrectly. Additionally, in this same 18-month period over 450 car seats were provided to low income residents, which included educational instruction on installation and

proper use.

Law Enforcement can also play a critical role in protecting our children from needless injury or death resulting from car crashes. There are three opportunities to educate the law enforcement officers at your agency.



The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) developed a 4-minute roll call video. This video can be used as a training tool for officers to become more familiar with the NYS Occupant Restraint Law, Section 1229-c. Many officers do not have experience correctly using and installing car seats or booster seats. The information in the video is an excellent overview of the child passenger safety law. The video can be found at this link: <https://>

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YS\\_jeFd8JtE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YS_jeFd8JtE). In addition, on the NYS Health Department webpage, Child Passenger Safety warning tickets (publication 6660) can be ordered free of charge.

The Car Seat Basics for Law Enforcement is a 60-90 minute training for officers who are not child passenger safety trained. This free training can be found at <https://www.cpsboard.org/trainings/car-seat-basics-law-enforcement/>. The training can be completed online or in-person. A currently certified Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) or Instructor (CPSTI) can deliver the in-person training.


The nationally certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technician program. This certification program is offered over a three to four day period. The participant must be 18 or older at the start of the course, complete the entire course and pass the three open-book quizzes. The course consists of classroom instruction, indoor and out-

door hands-on skills assessments using car seats and vehicles and a community check event. More information can be found at <https://cert.safekids.org/become-tech/certification-course>.

By utilizing the above information, officers are able to educate parents and caregivers on the NYS occupant protection law to keep our youngest community members safe when travelling in a vehicle. Our current roster of certified technicians continues to grow with an average of 20-30 new technician certifications awarded in Monroe County and surrounding counties annually. Our team also facilitates continuing education classes, to ensure the CPSTs stay up to date with new advancements and guidelines. If you need assistance finding a CPST in your area, or have any other questions, please contact our office at (585) 753-3018 or visit our CPS website at <https://www.monroecounty.gov/ts-childsafety>.

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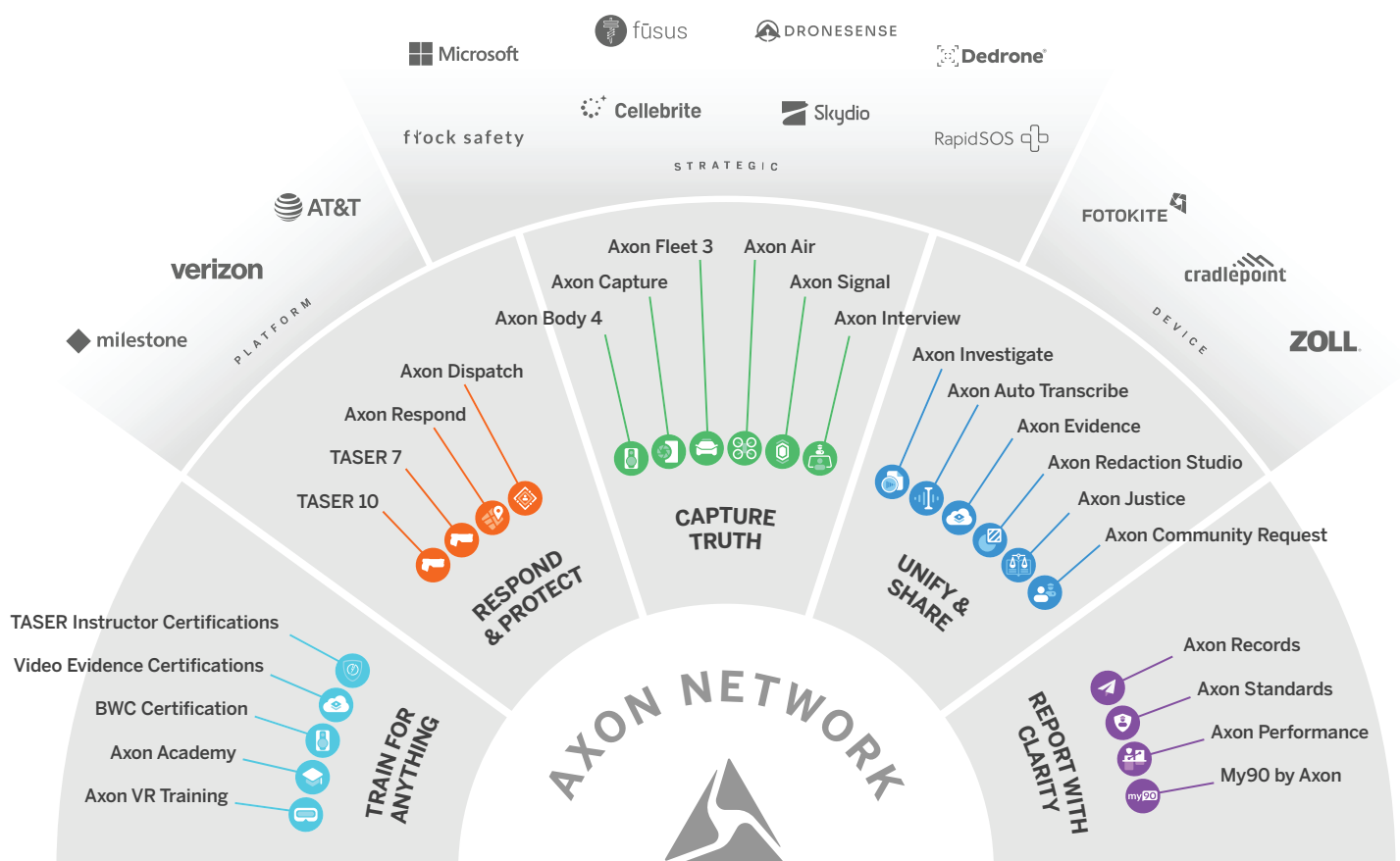
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# Factors in Leader Development

By Greg Veitch

Retired Chief of Police from Saratoga Springs, NY



## Ancient Leadership Wisdom

**H**ave you ever noticed that leadership principles do not change? Leadership is timeless. The first “bobbies” of the Metropolitan Police in London in 1829 needed the same things from their leaders that your officers need today.

Police officers need effective leaders. Leaders who are resilient, courageous, and caring. Leaders who get results, hold their officers accountable, and lead by example.

Police officers need leaders who care about them and their well-being. Leaders who know that every officer is more than just a body to fill a minimum staffing requirement.

Police officers need to work in a positive, healthy culture and police officers need a mission.

Recently, I was reviewing a collection of leadership quotes that I have compiled over the years and was struck by just how applicable ancient leadership principles are to today’s policing environment. A few examples of ancient leadership wisdom should give us a sense of just how timeless leadership principles really are.

**“I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep;**

**I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion.”**

This quote, attributed to the superb military commander and King of Macedon (336-323 BC), Alexander the Great, reminds us that who the leader is matters.

The commander of the department, division or unit is important. If the leader is lazy, unorganized, or not available when needed. If the leader of a unit does not hold anyone accountable and sets a poor example through ethical failures or poor performance, then what should we expect out of the group?

Conversely, leaders who set high standards for themselves and hold others accountable to professional standards will have well-run and productive work units. Where the Chief of Police goes, so goes the department.



Leaders set the tone, communicate the vision, and lead by example. Who the leader is makes a difference. As a more modern leadership guru (John Maxwell) puts it, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

The importance of the individual leader to any organization cannot be understated. The leader matters. It was as true for Alexander the Great, and it is for you today.

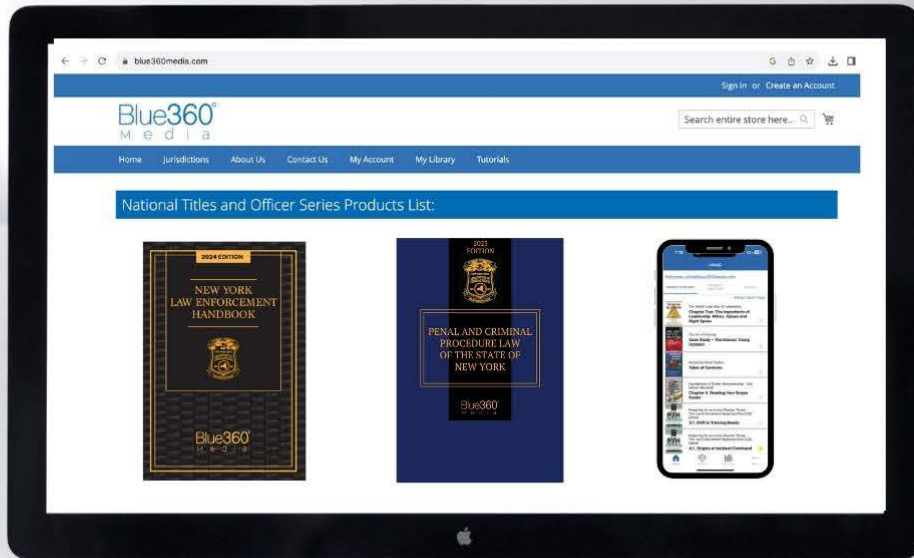
**“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.”**

The founder of western philosophy, Socrates (470-399 BC), gives us this nugget of wisdom that all leaders would be wise to take to heart.

Police officers experience more stress from their own bosses than they do from anything they face on the streets. Inconsistent, mean, thoughtless, cynical supervisors are all too common in police work. Hung up on their own issues and concerns, these “leaders” often



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neglect to recognize the unique value of each and every person that works for them.

Leaders know that everyone has challenges and struggles that sometimes require individual consideration. Good leaders are aware of and remember that all of their officers are human beings first and foremost and not just boxes on the organizational chart. When we recall Socrates' wisdom about being kind and understanding as we all face difficulties in life, we can become leaders who practice grace, understanding and forgiveness, which unfortunately seems to be in short supply these days.

The wisdom of the ancients is not limited to philosophical thought exercises. Sometimes they have very practical advice for us. Two examples should suffice.

**“Rewards for good service should not be delayed a single day.”**

Sun Tzu, the Chinese general writing around 2500 years ago in *The Art of War*, knew that part of a leader's job was to recognize and reward excellent performance. The more modern Transformational Leadership theory calls this contingent reward. From a simple thank you, to a medal pinned to the chest of an officer, leaders must acknowledge good work in a timely fashion.

Sun Tzu makes clear that as a practical matter, the reward should be given as soon after the performance as possible. Sun Tzu knew that the never-ending crush of management responsibility and the continuous problems needing the attention of a leader can often lead to our forgetting to applaud and reward the fine work our officers do every single day. Even if it is unintentional, failing to recognize and reward good performance has a negative effect on individual officers and the department as a whole.

Listen to Sun Tzu. Don't delay giving your officers the “atta-boys” they have earned.

Another practical example of ancient leadership wisdom that we can apply today comes from the Biblical book of Proverbs in Chapter 15, verse 22.

**“Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisors bring success.”**

Leadership can be lonely. Too often leaders isolate themselves. Thinking we can do it all ourselves or that we know it all, we sometimes push through our own agenda without stopping to consider other opinions or options.



While we sometimes admire the maverick, risk taking, self-confident leader, a more sober look at leadership might point us to the value in consensus building and collaboration.

No leader sees all and knows all. We all have blind spots. That is why it is so important for us to surround ourselves with wise counsel. Looking back on my own leader-

ship journey, it seems clear to me now that during the times that I found myself having difficulty, or when things didn't go as planned, were the same times that I charged ahead with my own brilliant ideas without first seeking input or advice from trusted counselors. I forgot to heed the ancient leadership wisdom of having many advisors (ok, and maybe some of my ideas weren't so brilliant after all).

Pericles (495-429 BC) was a Greek statesman and general. He is credited with initiating the construction of the Acropolis in Athens. It is interesting then, that Pericles gives us this valuable leadership wisdom:

**“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”**

You often hear the word “legacy” at police chief conferences. You read about it in executive level books and articles. It is natural and good for leaders to want

to leave a legacy.

Police chiefs have many opportunities to change their organizations. Often, we find ourselves working on major projects like a new building that can consume our time and efforts. Implementing new policies can be an exhausting process, especially if the policy is a contentious or controversial one, or your manual has not been updated since the Nixon presidency. How many meetings and drafts does it take to change the uniform policy again?

There is no doubt that police leaders do have to attend to the physical and policy needs of the department. We should have modern buildings and up to date policies. Research, purchase, train, issue the policy, and implement those body cameras, but while doing so keep in mind what Pericles said all those years ago.

What you leave behind will be the remnants of your efforts to mentor, encourage, motivate, support and develop your people. Leaving the next generation of your agency with a solid, professional culture and effective

leadership will be more important than the shiny new things that you worked so long and hard to get.

Whether we read Sun Tzu and Socrates or Peter Senge and Jocko Willink. If we gather sayings and quotes from Alexander the Great or Martin Luther King, Jr., we will notice some common themes.

Leadership is timeless. Leading by example worked the same in 2023 BC as it does in 2023 AD. Mentoring, encouraging, and supporting your future leaders worked the same for Sir Robert Peel in 1829 London, England as it does for you today. Rewarding excellence worked for the Roman Empire and it works for your police department right now.

Leaders should read modern management books and attend the latest development training sessions. We should approach leading today by practicing modern management techniques. But we must not forget that there is much ancient leadership wisdom that has stood the test of time and that can be very valuable to us as we do our best along our own leadership journey.

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# Back Then, a Ticket Book. Today, an iPad. Why We Need to Learn from Tragedies in Other High-Risk Industries

By Gordon Graham

**G**ordon Graham here and thanks for the feedback on these writings – and for taking the time to read my thoughts on the goings-on in our profession. The theme of my last article in this series was “there are no new ways to get in trouble.” Near the end of that article, I provided my seven-step approach to “make the knowledge of all the knowledge of one.” Step three on that list is to learn from tragedies in high-risk industries outside law enforcement.

Let’s go back to 1977 for a moment. I was still a motorcop working for the CHP in Los Angeles and I was just finishing up my graduate studies at the University of Southern California in the Institute of Safety and Systems Management. My thesis was entitled “NPC-CR: Non-Punitive Close Call Reporting in CHP Motorcycle Operations.”

What the heck is NPCCR all about? I learned this in 1975 from Chaytor Mason, the great risk manager of the 60s and 70s and one of my favorite professors at the ISSM. He enlightened me to the writings of H.W. Heinrich, the great risk management guru of the 1930s. If you get the chance, run his name through your search engine. His thoughts are still being discussed today, and if you take the time to read about him, you’ll see he was extremely controversial.

Heinrich developed some thinking called “BBS” – Behavior-Based Safety. Since he was with the Traveler’s Insurance Company, it was his belief that most ac-

cidents were caused by the worker. The company could do no wrong. He studied tens of thousands of accident reports (mostly prepared by supervisors) and concluded that 88% of them were caused by worker error.

This theory inflamed some people, who blamed the work environment for the problems, not the individual worker. Unions were particularly upset with his research and over the years many continue to assault his theories.

I have some problems with Heinrich’s BBS theory too, specifically when it addresses single-site factory jobs. It is my belief most injuries caused at these sites result from the environment of the workplace, not the worker. If people are regularly getting hurt doing the same tasks in a controlled setting, there is something wrong with the working environment. These workplaces should be designed with safety in mind, and even if a worker gets careless, it should not result in an injury.

However, when you move out of the single factory site into the complex, real-world of operations such as law enforcement, management, supervisors, unions and the workers must accept more responsibility for being safe. The complex, continually changing dynamics of your job require that workers regularly access their “loaded hard drive” to stay safe and avoid problems up front.

Over time, your individual hard drive will load up



with your job experiences. Some of the experiences involve close calls in which you almost got hurt or worse. You learned a lesson from these incidents, one that you will never forget. Your hard drive is permanently loaded.

Who did you share this new information with? Probably no one, because of fear of embarrassment or discipline. This is sad. Had you killed yourself or lost a leg, then everyone learns from your tragedy. As Chaytor Mason said, “The only time you learn from the mistakes of another is when they end in tragedy.”

This is unacceptable. Waiting for people to die so we can learn a lesson from the death is simply un-American.

### The Triangle of Probability

Heinrich had a theory on how mistakes end up in tragedy. Capsulizing what he said regarding people, activities and mistakes, here is my take on his work.

Give me a group of people doing the same or similar task. It does not matter what the occupation, profession or job description is. Take my occupation in the 1970s. As a motorcycle cop, I was part of a bigger group – all CHP Central Los Angeles motorcops – and there were about 50 of us.

And we were part of a bigger group – all motorcops in Southern Division – essentially Los Angeles County. That group was about 250 strong. We were part of a bigger group – all CHP motor cops – about 500 total. We were part of a bigger group in California (1,500 or so motor cops), in the U.S. and finally internationally.

Here is Heinrich’s logic: When the group makes 300 mistakes, 30 will end up in a mishap and one will end up in the “big one.” This is called the Triangle of Probability.

We all learn from the mistakes of a co-worker when they are seriously injured or killed (the top of the triangle). This is a good idea. But sadly, it does not benefit the person who was hurt or killed during that event. We learn – but the consequences are devastating.

The better idea is to learn when it was just a mishap (the middle of the triangle). Hence the value of reporting minor injuries and property-damage-only events. Sprains, tears, rips, falls, cuts, bruises and other minor injuries fall into this category. And after reporting these events, they must be documented. And then they must be studied. And then we must share the lessons with others. But still, this is only a “better” idea.

The best idea is to learn when it was just a mistake (the bottom of the triangle), because mistakes are 300 times more frequent than tragedies – with no severity at all. Call it an error, lapse, omission or anything else you want, but if you have a close call you need to share it with the group – the other similarly situated personnel in your department. And if I had my way, these experiences would be shared nationally, too.

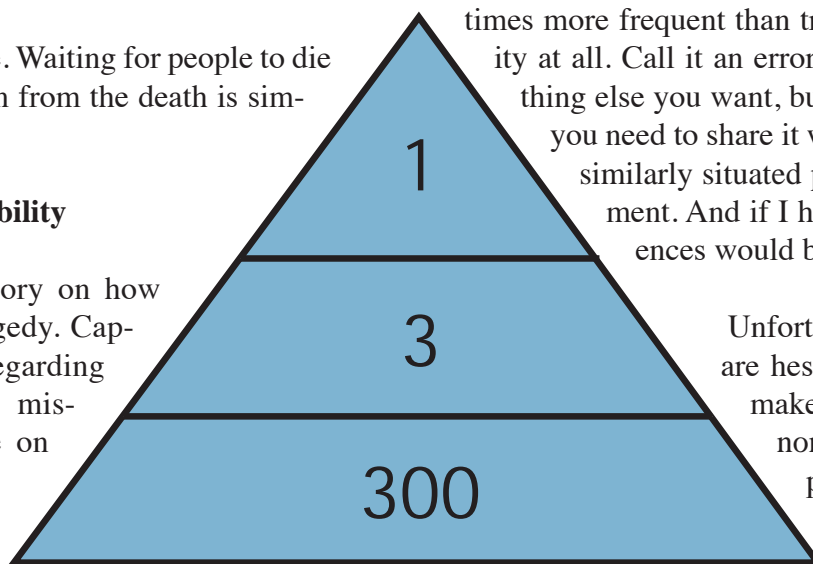
Unfortunately, many people are hesitant to admit when they make errors. Developing a non-punitive close call reporting system is key to overcoming that hesitancy, and building a national database

of close calls in law enforcement would help us take advantage of the greater volume of mistakes.

### Similarly Situated Devices

But let’s go back to 1977 for a moment. I could not get CHP management interested in my thesis, which would have required collecting data (close calls). In fact, at that time my captain dismissed me as an idiot. Fast-forward to 1982 when I was promoted to sergeant and I had my own squad of cops. I encouraged them to talk about their close calls in shift briefings. Oddly enough, not one of them had ever had a close call! Fear of embarrassment, fear of discipline, fear of doing something new is difficult to overcome.

My next effort was sharing my close calls as a motorcop with my squad – but I am just one person with a limited number of close calls. I requested the assistance of my fellow sergeants on afternoon shift to talk about their close calls – and they, too, were hesitant to do so. Fear of embarrassment, fear of discipline, fear of doing something new is difficult to overcome.





About that time a brand-new sergeant promoted into Central Los Angeles. I told her what I was trying to do and she had ZERO hesitation in helping me out. The next shift I set up the conversation with all the cops in briefing and asked her to share her close call – and she did.

She was never a motorcop, but she related that when she was working in a patrol car, she always had her ticket book on the dashboard of the car for easy access. One day she got involved in a high-speed city street pursuit. On the hard turns the ticket book – back then, a thick leather folder that enclosed the paper citations – started sliding back and forth across the dashboard of the car. On one 90-degree right-hand turn, the ticket book slid quickly across the dashboard and got jammed between the spotlight handle and the steering wheel – really stuck – which prevented her from being able to quickly exit the turning maneuver. The steering wheel was jammed, so she had to physically hit the ticket book to dislodge it. Fortunately, it broke free and she was able to continue the chase.

That was a close call with a valuable lesson learned. And it happened prior to 1982.

“Gordon, you are way, way over your word count on this – is there some point you would like to make?”

Well, last year the fire service suffered the loss of two pilots and an expensive helicopter in Idaho while fighting a wildland fire. The post-crash investigation noted that a loose iPad may have become jammed beneath a pedal midflight.

How do we know? Investigators examining the iPad found distinct gouge marks on it. They then conducted testing using a similarly configured helicopter. During the test, additional pressure applied to one of the pilot’s pedals caused the lodged iPad “to apply more pressure to the (co-pilot’s) pedal adjustment lever.” The stuck iPad also prevented the pedals from recentering during the test. These findings led the agency to conclude that the iPad became jammed against the copilot’s left pedal. Due to their seat arrangements and heights, they were



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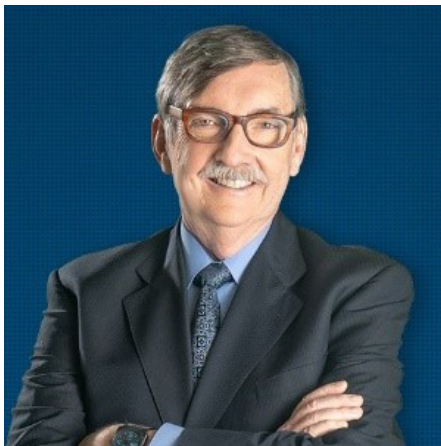
unable to reach the device to free it. This is listed as a significant factor in the crash.

In an interview following the investigation, Clint Johnson, chief of the National Transportation Safety Board’s Alaska regional office, noted this was not the first time that an electronic device — including phones, cameras and iPads — had fallen into flight controls and contributed to accidents: “We’re just trying to call attention to some of the concerns about having this kind of equipment inside the cockpit and making sure they’re secured.”

He’s not the only one. The general manager of the company contracted to fly the helicopter noted that pilots need to find safe ways to secure devices during flight. “When the final report is released, we will be more than willing to share more information and hopefully help educate our industry on safe practices and guidance that will prevent future incidents and accidents,” he wrote.

There is a message here. We must study the tragedies from other high-risk occupations – because there are truly no new ways to get in trouble. This is step three in my

seven-step process in making the knowledge of all the knowledge of one.



Gordon Graham is a 33-year veteran of law enforcement and is the co-founder of Lexipol, where he serves on the current board of directors. A practicing attorney, Graham focuses on managing risk in public safety

operations and has presented a commonsense approach to risk management to hundreds of thousands of public safety professionals around the world. He holds a master’s degree in Safety and Systems Management from University of Southern California and a Juris Doctorate from Western State University.

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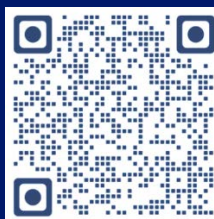
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# PRESS RELEASE

***Steve Rotunno, Chief of Police***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**For more information, contact:**  
**August 25, 2023**  
**Chief Steve Rotunno**

**Srotunno@ciceronypd.gov**

If you happen to see a Cicero Police Officer wearing spooky police patch this week the Cicero Police Benevolent Association had special Halloween patches made for officers to wear during the week of October 23 through Halloween.

Officer Cole Schanbacher came up with the idea after doing some research on special holiday patches that other police agencies wear.

Officer Schanbacher partnered with ghost-patch.com a company that is owned and operated by a law enforcement officer and came up with our Halloween design. Officer Schanbacher focused on our current police patch that displays people on a carriage and came up with this special Halloween design.

If you see a Cicero Officer, say hello and check out the spooky patch.



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New York State Association of  
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Click on the link above. The  
image to the left is the group  
you should join. The old site  
is no longer in use.

**Tuckahoe Police Department**  
November 21 at 6:52 PM · 🌐

Earlier this week, The Tuckahoe Police Department and The Tuckahoe PBA donated dozens of turkeys to members of the community and faith based groups located around the village. This yearly tradition is so rewarding and allows us to help those who are less fortunate during the holiday season!

The Tuckahoe Police Department would like to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving! 🦃



**New York State Police** 🇺🇸  
November 28 at 2:36 PM · 🌐



**Nassau County Police Department**  
November 20 at 1:15 PM · 🌐

Big Brothers Big Sisters Long Island visited the #NassauCountyPD Police Academy and received a tour, a pizza party 🍕, and got to watch the Super Mario Brothers movie 🎬 with our NCPD Community Affairs unit, LEO the lion and Commissioner Ryder. We all had a great time! 🥳



**City of Peekskill Police Department**  
November 18 at 11:34 AM · 🌐

A happy Saturday it is at this morning's Saturday Academy, held at PKMS! SRO Greenan looks like she's having a blast with our mascot "Chance", students, members of Inner Being - llc and the Peekskill City School District. 🤝

#CommunityPolicing  
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