



DESTINATION ZERO

COLLABORATING TO ADVANCE
OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Gloucester Township Police Department

The Township of Gloucester is a 24 square mile suburban community located in Camden County, New Jersey. The Township is located eight miles east of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and fifty miles from Atlantic City, New Jersey. State Highway 168 and the Atlantic City Expressway are main thoroughfares that are within the Township that allow direct access to Philadelphia and Atlantic City. The access the roadways provide is what has contributed to the growth we have experienced over the years with the Township ranked as the 19th most populous municipality in the state as of the 2010 census. We handle approximately 60,000 calls for service each year.

Gloucester Township was founded in 1685 and consists of eight communities; Glendora, Chews Landing, Hilltop, Blenheim, Blackwood, Lambs Terrace, Erial and parts of Sicklerville. The last census from 2010 determined the population of the Township to be 64,634 but with increased housing developments since then, our population is estimated to be around 70,000 now.

The Gloucester Township Police Department was established by ordinance in 1927 with three officers; a Chief, Captain and one officer. Today, the Gloucester Township Police Department is a full service agency with 186 total employees with 133 sworn full time police officers. The department is supplemented by 8 class II (armed) special law enforcement officers and 20 class I (unarmed) special law enforcement offices. Additionally we have 12 full time and 5 part time Telecommunicators staffing our communications center, 16 civilian professional staff for administrative functions, 6 school crossing guards, 2 agents and 7 volunteer Police Chaplains. The department also has a police community volunteer program with 14 volunteers that assist with critical incidents and special events by with any non-officer tasks that may be needed.

Chief David J. Harkins took command of the agency in 2019 and under his leadership, we have strived to improve officer safety and wellness initiatives for all agency employees.



General Officer Safety

Body Armor and Protective Gear

The Gloucester Township Police Department issues custom-fit body armor to all our sworn and class II Officers. The department issues level IIIA vest which includes a Paraclete speedplate IIIA which is worn in the front plate pocket. These vests are purchased through the Federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership grant and the New Jersey Body Armor Replacement Fund grant. All body armor is replaced every five years or sooner if it is damaged.

All officers are required to wear their issued body armor when in uniform and engaged in field activities and firearms training. Non-uniformed officers are required to have their armor with them and wear when they have to respond to an incident. Uniform officers have the option to wear concealed body armor or an approved uniform outer vest carrier. Non-uniformed officers are issued outer vest carriers.



Additionally, the 17 officers assigned to the Special Response Team (SRT) are issued level III tactical body armor with front and rear rifle threat protection.

Beginning in 2017, the department purchased a level IV rifle rated plate carrier and a ballistic helmet with clear riot face guard for each officer. The plate carriers and helmets are required to be worn in any high-risk situation such as a possibly armed barricaded subjects, hostage incidents, sniper incidents, terrorist incidents, possibly armed suicidal subjects, bomb or explosive device incidents, civil disturbances, Tier 2 or Tier 3 School or Facility lockdowns, and search warrant or arrest warrant executions where potentially armed and / or dangerous persons or situations may be present.



Gloucester Township Police currently have 3 patrol canine and 1 bloodhound team. Each canine is equipped with a level IIIA canine ballistic vest that is worn when the canine is tracking a known or potentially armed subject. Each vest was purchased with funds donated by private citizens or companies.



The department has assigned 2 Ballistic Shields to patrol as well as 2 to the supervisor response vehicles. Additionally the Special Response Team has 2 shields for use. These shields are deployed in high-risk situations. Patrol Officers receive periodic shield training through our training cadre.



For any situation where there is a possibility for CS gas to be used, officers are issued a gas mask and carrier. Officers are annually fit tested for their mask fit and receive periodic training on using the mask during firearms training.



Weaponry

We are in the process of transferring from Sig Sauer P229 40cal handguns to Sig Sauer P365 9mm handguns with red-dot sights. The P229 models were originally purchased in 2005. The upgrade will ensure that officers are equipped with the newest shooting platform with the same threat stopping power. The addition of the red dot sights will improve officer accuracy in a stressful situation where accuracy of rounds fired is paramount. The transition to the P365 will encompass a 2 day familiarization training course and a state mandated handgun qualification course. All officers will be qualified and issued the new handgun by April of 2022.



The department has authorized weapon-mounted lights for handguns and rifles. Weapon-mounted lights can be used by officers who are exposed to low light situations. Weapon-mounted lights are not intended to replace an officer's hand-held flashlight, and use of the weapon-mounted light system in this manner is strictly prohibited. Use of the weapon-mounted light is limited to high-risk situations where an officer is justified in drawing and

displaying his/her firearm.

Each patrol vehicle is also assigned a Remington model 11-87 or model 870 shotgun. Each shotgun is equipped with a sidesaddle shell holder and tactical sling. The shotgun is kept in a secure shotgun rack in the driver compartment of the patrol vehicle so officers can easily access it when needed by depressing a hidden switch.

48 patrol officers and 8 school resource officers are qualified to carry a Colt M-4 or a Smith & Wesson M&P 15 patrol rifle. Officers selected attended a weeklong patrol rifle qualification course. Upon graduation they are assigned a patrol rifle that is kept in a secure patrol rifle rack located in their assigned patrol vehicle and can be accessed during an incident utilizing a hidden switch. Officers qualify quarterly per state guidelines. Rifle qualified officers also receive periodic training on active shooter situations.



Annual Firearms Qualification

New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines mandate that all sworn officers qualify with their issued duty firearms (handgun, shotgun, and patrol rifle) bi-annually. We take the responsibility of firearms proficiency and safety seriously and require additional range training. Each year our sworn personnel are required to successfully complete tactical range training with their duty handgun and shotgun. They are also required to complete low light range training with their handgun and shotgun, thus providing at least two annual weapon qualifications. Additionally, Officers are required to bi-annually qualify with all off-duty/extra-duty weapons that they are authorized to carry. Those Officers, who desire to do so, are also encouraged to attend several open range dates throughout the year to increase their firearms proficiency with all weapons that they are issued and/or carry.



Backup Weapons Authorized

To increase safety, Officers are authorized to carry a back-up weapon and must qualify with it bi-annually in an approved handgun qualification course. To ensure proper authorization and tracking, Officers who elect to carry a backup weapon must submit a written request to the Supervising Firearms Instructor through the normal chain of command. The backup handgun must be carried in a holster approved by the Supervising Firearms Instructor. Back up handguns are required to be either a revolver or semi-automatic model capable of utilizing a minimum ammunition size .380-caliber 90-grain ammunition, and a maximum size of .45 Caliber 230-grain ammunition. Back up handguns shall not exceed a 6 inch barrel length with a weight of 45 ounces empty.

Vehicle Selection

For the 90's until 2012, our vehicle fleet consisted of mostly Ford Crown Vic Police Interceptor models for patrol assignments. With the end of production for the Crown Vic, we researched switching to the new Ford Interceptor Utility PPV, the Ford Sedan Police Interceptor, Chevrolet Caprice PPV or the Dodge Charger pursuit vehicle. After discussions that included our Township vehicle maintenance supervisor, we decided on the Ford Interceptor Utility PPV. This decision was made on several factors that included all-wheel drive for inclement weather but more importantly, the safety benefits the vehicle offered. The Utility PPV had a high crash rating for rear end collisions up to 75mph. We wanted our officers to have the best and safest vehicle we could get as they would be spending 12 plus hours a day in them.

The importance of selecting the Utility PPV was shown in March, 2019 when one of our officers was assisting the NJ State Police with a DWI crash on Route 42. While the officers was parked on the shoulder with his emergency lights on, a drunk driver in a Jeep Wrangler travelling at approximately 65 mph ran into the rear of his vehicle. Due to the construction of the Utility PPV, our officer survived with injuries that unfortunately caused him to medically retire but in other vehicles could have proved fatal.



AEDs

In 2000, our initial 5 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) were purchased and assigned to the Patrol Bureau. Since then purchased an additional 2 so that 7 are on the street at all times. We also purchased and placed AED's in headquarters, the training facility and Gloucester Township Police Family Resource Center. All officers, class II and Class 1 SLEOs are certified in the AED and CPR.



Narcan

In order to enhance Officer, K-9 and public safety, in 2014 we issued Intranasal Narcan (naloxone) to all department vehicles. Narcan was also placed in various locations in headquarters, the training facility and the Family Resource Center for utilization on arrestees or visitors who experience an opioid overdose. A policy was created in order to ensure proper training, usage, storage, record keeping, and replacement of the Narcan. Any officer issued Narcan is required to successfully complete the Narcan training program. To date, officers have deployed Narcan 218 times with 194 Narcan saves documented.



Medical Kits in Cars

Each marked and unmarked vehicle is equipped with a medical kit for initial on scene medical care as the officer awaits EMS arrival. The kit contains oxygen, a bag valve mask for CPR, Narcan and gauze/Band-Aids.



Tourniquets

As tourniquets have been proven critical in life saving incidents involving blood loss in extremity wounds, each officer is issued an OSS trauma plate tourniquet pack. The tourniquet is placed in the officer's body armor front trauma plate pocket. Every officer is required to keep the tourniquet packet in this location so that in the event its needed for a downed officer, the packet can be easily accessed and deployed. Additionally, each patrol vehicle is equipped with

a medical kit that contains a combat tourniquet. Officers periodically train in tourniquet use during use of force training scenarios.



Bleeding Control Kits

The department purchased 2 bleeding control kits for use during a casualty event. The kits are located where they can be easily accessed if needed in our police watch desk area and in municipal switchboard area. The kits are red so they stand out. Each kit contains 1 CAT Tourniquet, 1 6" responder ETD Trauma dressing, 1 Quick clot bleeding control dressing, 1 Responder Compressed Gauze, 1 HyFin vent compact twin pack (Chest Seal), 2 pair of rubber gloves, 1 pair of Trauma shears, 1 Permanent Marker, 1 Just in Time instruction card (Bleeding Control) and 1 NAR QuiK Litter survival blanket. Officers received roll call training on the kit and its use. Bleeding control training is conducted as part of bi-annual use of force/ firearms training.



Personal Protective Equipment Usage and Training

In order to safeguard personnel from blood-borne pathogens, body fluid, and other hazardous substance exposure, blood-borne pathogens and hazardous communication training is required of department all employees (including professional staff) on an annual basis.

In addition, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are provided to all personnel who operate marked/unmarked police cars. This includes protective eyewear, facemasks, Tyvek contamination suits, boot covers and disinfectant. PPE is also available to personnel working inside our headquarters building and police training building.



Less lethal Devices

Along with the recent purchase of CEDs, in 2005, the department began using a pepper ball launching system (PLS) to deliver PAVA powder in circumstances where less lethal force was deemed necessary. The PLS provides officers with a safe, effective and simple-to-use alternative to existing compliance systems. Pepper Ball projectiles combine a safe level of kinetic impact with a PAVA powder. These projectiles are accurately delivered at distances up to 60 feet using a compressed air system. As the projectile strike and break apart, the resulting powder envelops the eyes and enters the breathing passages. They can be used in a variety of applications, including control of an uncooperative or violent person, standoff and barricade situations, civil disorder control, prison/cell extraction, suicide-by-cop, drug labs/warrant service, domestic violence, and vessel interdiction.



Only officers trained and qualified to use the PLS are authorized to deploy when needed. Officers receive periodic training on its use and it is incorporated into training scenarios on use of force. We currently have 5 PLS units in service with 2 on the street at all times.

Conducted Energy Devices

In 2012, the department purchased AXON Taser X-2 Controlled Energy Devices (TASERS) after they were approved for use by the New Jersey Attorney General. In 2021 we upgraded to the Taser7. All uniformed patrol officers and detectives are trained and issued a CED. The Taser 7 also links with the officers AXON Body 3 BWC and automatically activates the recording function, if not already in progress, if the officers conducts a spark display or discharges the CED.

The determination was made to carry the CED on the officer's weak side on their duty belt, opposite their weapon side. This was done as officers will revert to muscle memory during stressful incident and there could be confusion in drawing their weapon versus their CED if both carried strong side. Officers train annually on the CED use and it is incorporated into our training scenarios and use of force simulator.



Crisis Intervention Training



In 2005, Camden County began Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for officers. The 40 hour training is based on the Memphis City CIT program. The County CIT program is a collaboration of professionals committed to improving the law enforcement system and the mental health system's response to persons



experiencing a psychiatric crisis who come into contact with law enforcement first responders.



Officers who complete the training are authorized to wear a CIT pin on their uniform to denote they are a certified CIT officer and for consumers to easily identify them. We also created a policy on handling mentally ill persons. Per the policy, CIT officers are dispatched to all mental health/crisis calls if they are available. Additionally a pocket card with CIT information as created. All officers are required to carry the card which gives the consumer information on the CIT process and addresses of local hospitals and crisis centers.

We initially trained 10 officers in 2005 but have expanded the number of officers over the years. The pandemic has halted the training for the past 2 years but we were advised that courses will begin again in 2022.



Body Worn Cameras (BWC) and Car cameras

In 2017, the department purchased AXON Body 2 Body Worn Camera system. At the time, the purchase was completed using Township funds. At the time, the New Jersey Attorney General issued a directive on the use of body worn cameras by agencies. They was no requirement to have or use BWC's but that has now changed as of 2021 when a new directive was issued. The AXON body worn cameras were selected as they met the requirements that the Attorney General set forth for the devices. The cameras can be manually activated by the officer, automatically when the vehicle's emergency lights are activated or most recently, when the officer removes their weapon from its holster with the signal sidearm attachment. Cameras are required to be activated for all calls for service and for any citizen contacts.

The department made the determination to purchase BWC's as they are a valuable asset intended to assist officers in solving crimes and successfully prosecuting



offenders by augmenting an officer's testimony with a video/audio record of the incident. BWC recordings preserve accurate visual depictions of physical evidence and also document how physical evidence was found, thereby helping to establish the facts that must be presented in Fourth Amendment suppression hearings. BWCs also record the physical appearance of suspects and crime victims, preserving evidence of any apparent injuries. The audio portion of BWC recordings document witness and suspect statements. This preserves not only the substantive content of those statements, but may also show whether officers have legal requirements.

Additionally, this equipment enabled department administrators to conduct periodic reviews of officer- citizen contacts for quality control purposes and aid in the investigation of citizen complaints. BWC's promote police accountability and transparency. A BWC recording of a police-involved shooting or other use of force incident can often provide objective evidence of what occurred. The practical utility of BWCs discourages officers and civilians from engaging in inappropriate conduct. These devices also discourage both law enforcement and civilian witnesses from providing false information about the circumstances of the encounter; a BWC recording not only can vindicate an officer who is falsely accused of misconduct, but also discourage a person from making false allegations against the officer in the first place.

Cameras were purchased for each officer, 134 total. At the initial implementation, a work group was created that consisted of representatives of administration, patrol, detectives and our police union. This was done to address and alleviate any concerns that officers would have with program as BWC's were new to the department. Because of the work groups input, we were able to implement the program with full officer buy in and minimal issues during the first year. We have since upgraded to the AXON Body 3 body worn cameras.



Supervisors are required per policy to conduct a random review of 3 videos per officer, per month. Upon review, supervisors are required, if necessary, make any recommendations for training, discipline, or positive performance recognition resulting from the observations. The appropriate Division Commander shall review such findings to determine if any individual or group is in need of further training. Additionally all use of force and pursuits are required to be reviewed for compliance or training issues.

The department has also added the AXON Respond livestream program that can be viewed in our police dispatch center or in a supervisors vehicle.. This program allows a supervisor to access live video from an officer's BWC. This function is limited to only being used in a critical incident when there may be a need to view live video of the incident occurring. Supervisors can use it to assess the need for additional assets that can assist the officer in need.

In 2010, the department purchased L3 in car cameras for all marked patrol vehicles. In 2019, we upgraded to AXON fleet cameras for all marked and unmarked patrol vehicles. The AXON FLEET system works in conjunction with the BWC program for recording. Videos are activated

manually, with the vehicles emergency lights or by removing the officer's weapon from its holster.



Thermal Cameras

To assist our canine officers on suspect tracks at nighttime or in dark buildings, each canine officer was assigned a handheld SEEK thermal camera. The cameras detect heat in complete darkness which will helps an officer locate someone attempting to hide or evade the canine.



COVID

When the covid pandemic began in March of 2020, the department immediately enacted a temporary special order and procedures to ensure that employees remained safe and to minimize potential staffing issues that could occur from contacting the virus. Through prior planning, the department had a supply of N95 masks on hand. Additional supplies of N95 masks, gloves, hand sanitizer were immediately purchased. We also purchased 2 portable UV-C lantern system for sanitizing work areas, an AeroClave RDS3110 sanitizer for the prisoner area and larger spaces and 4 bioblast portable sprayers for sanitizing vehicles. A facial thermometer was also purchased and installed at the main officer/prisoner entrance so that people entering with fevers could immediately be identified.

The Township closed the building to the public and instituted a work from home procedure for non-essential employees. Police professional staff that were identified as being able to work from home were issued spare MDT's and cell phones to use. Through social media and voice mail messaging, residents were encouraged to use the records management unit email to request copies of reports. Staff that were unable to work from home were required to follow

covid protocols that included maintaining distance from one another, daily temperature checks and mandatory mask wearing.

The public was also encouraged to use our online reporting system for non-violent crimes. This could be done through the department website or through our reporting kiosk that was installed in 2019. Online reports were reviewed by the assigned desk officer who then followed up as needed.

Access to our police communication center was restricted to minimize personal contact. Plastic barriers were installed between each dispatch console and all personnel were required to wear N95 mask and perform daily temperature checks. Information to officers in headquarters was relayed by phone or a paperwork drop box that was set up outside the access door. The center was also sanitized by UV-C lantern system 2 times a day.

Once the vaccine was approved, we coordinated with Rowan University for officers to receive their COVID vaccines during a set time frame. This allowed all officers and police employees that wanted to get the vaccine to do so with minimal wait time.

For Officers, the order detailed that officers:

- Were issued department N-95 facemask and were required to have on them at all times while working and wear whenever required in dealing with the public.
- All vehicles and police areas were immediately sanitized after non-police personnel where in the area.
- The prisoner transport van was required to be used for transports to minimize officer contact.
- NJ Health Department Covid flags were generated for each person who the State health department advised had tested positive for COVID. This was done so that officers/EMS personnel were aware when dispatched to a household where a resident had tested positive for COVID. This flag requirement was later rescinded by the state.
- Use of a BWC for recording statements was authorized in lieu of the interview recording room to minimize non-police personnel from accessing restricted areas.
- The department set up multiple ZOOM accounts so that command staff/ OEM could hold virtual meetings.
- All roll call/briefing were held outside under our canopy with officers spaced at least 6 feet apart per CDC guidelines.
- Officers who tested positive received paid sick time while out.



The COVID Crisis Procedures special order was in effect until May 2021 when pandemic restrictions were eased.



Civil Disturbance Team

To enhance officer safety during civil unrest, we proactively created a Civil Disturbance Team comprised of 2 Sergeants and 10 Gloucester Township Police Officers. The team also supports Camden County Agencies through a mutual aid agreement. This team is specially trained for civil unrest and riot control response and containment. To support the team, a civil disturbance support trailer was created and placed in service. The trailers is stocked with specialized equipment to provide officers with equipment needed to safely resolve a civil disturbance incident.

Team members wear a department issued uniform are equipped with, level III threat protection soft body armor, helmets with face shields, riot batons, and additional upper torso protection, hand, elbow, shin, and knee protection. They are also equipped with 36" and 48" acrylic riot shields. Properly training and equipping these officers for this type of duty will help ensure proper response to these situations and enhance deputy and officer safety.



For situations where the team response may not be appropriate or if awaiting the arrival of the team and support trailer, the department created a mass disturbance kit that is deployed with one of the patrol Sergeants during a shift. The kit contains a bullhorn,, OC spray and temporary restraint devices. We also have a prisoner transport van that can be used for situations were

several arrest could potentially or have occurred. This allows 2 officers to transport multiple arrestees safely at one time instead of utilizing needed manpower for the incident.



In the past 3 years, there has only been one planned protest in Gloucester Township and a few in the county. The team was placed on standby for the incidents but was fortunately not needed. As there is always the possibility of an incident of civil unrest occurring as reaction to a lethal law enforcement response, assigned team members as well as officers receive training on procedures and equipment use to help ensure public and officer safety.

Lenco BearCat Armored Rescue Vehicle (ARV)



In 2013 we took delivery of a \$300K Lenco BearCat G2 tactical armored rescue vehicle. The BearCat protects first responders and allows them to safely approach potentially deadly situations under the cover of an armored rescue vehicle. The armor allows us to rescue wounded citizens and first responders, and to evacuate citizens from life-threatening situations, such as barricaded suspect and active shooter scenarios.

To ensure the proper operation of the vehicle, three members of the Special Response Team participated in a 3-day training session in which internationally recognized training experts provided them hands-on training in the utilization of the BearCat. This training allowed officers to become more confident in the capabilities of the vehicle. These officers then conducted a three day training session with the remainder of the tactical team at our training facility. Additionally, designated Officers received hands on driver training so that the vehicle could be deployed in an emergent situation where an immediate deployment was needed.

The BearCat is equipped with a thermal camera for viewing outside areas during nighttime hours. The ARV also has a ram bar system. The system is a breaching tool that is deployed on the front of the vehicle and controlled from inside. The ram bar is used to open locked doors/windows or knock down barricades/debris to allow our robot or SRT personnel to enter the building.

The BearCat deploys anytime there is a potential for armed-subject encounters, such as active shooter situations, barricaded armed subjects, tactical situations, high-risk search warrant executions, and at the request of neighboring agencies per our mutual aid agreement. This potentially life-saving piece of equipment is one of three in the Camden County area

Since its delivery, we have utilized the BearCat in training scenarios with surrounding law enforcement agencies and fire departments so that they are aware of its tactical capabilities. Since we began collecting the data in 2016, the Bearcat has been used on over 94 search/arrest warrant assignments and 13 critical incidents where the SRT responded.

On January 8th 2018, Officers responded for a reported male shooting a rifle in the Brittany Woods development in the Sicklerville section of Gloucester Township. The male barricaded himself in the home when officers arrived. The SRT and CNT members responded with the ARV. The ARV was positioned out front while attempting to make contact with the male who was holding 2 people hostage. While attempting negotiations, the male began firing his rifle at the ARV, striking it several times in the windshield and front-end area. No officers were injured as the ARV was able to withstand the rifle rounds and protect the officers inside. A second bearcat responded and was utilized to safely remove adjacent residents during the incident. The male eventually committed suicide but no officers or civilians were injured.





Active Shooter Training



Unfortunately mass shooting situations have become more commonplace across the nation with over 689 incidents being reported in 2021. To better prepare our Officers to properly respond to an incident, in addition to properly equipping them for such an incident, we have also trained our Officers on how to respond to a mass shooting/active shooter incident through regular role play scenarios. These training scenarios have occurred at our local high schools, private technical school, County College, Gloucester Premium Outlets mall and several closed commercial buildings that the property owners allowed us to use for training purposes.

The scenarios at times have incorporated our dispatchers, additional EMS and Fire Department personnel and volunteer actors from the college. Realism for the scenarios was enhanced with the use of special simmunition weapons/rounds that are specifically assigned for training. Each training evolution is critiqued by the training cadre and issues/tactics are corrected at the time. The realistic training better



prepares officers for what they may encounter should they be called upon to respond to a mass shooting incident.

De-escalation-Use of Force Training

Even prior to events over the past two years that have led to increased police use of force scrutiny by the community, Officers have received training on proper use of force applications and de-escalation techniques. These techniques are crucial to the safety of our Officers and our success as a law enforcement agency. Officers use on a monthly basis our MILO Range system purchased in 2015. This fully interactive system allows officers to experience hundreds of scenarios that enable them to train in most difficult real-world situations, including ambushes, active shooters while maintaining full situational awareness during extreme stress. Officer presence, communication skills training, tactical de-escalation training, CED, and deadly force, are all available for simulation using simulator wear equipment.



In 2021, Gloucester Township Police earned the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) certification from Georgetown Law. The ABLE project is a national hub for training, technical assistance and research with an aim of creating a police culture in which officers intervene as necessary to prevent misconduct, avoid police mistakes and promote officer health and wellness. (<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/cics/able>).

To become ABLE certified, we had to submit letters of recommendation from community leaders, assign instructors to be ABLE trained and certified and then assign every sworn officer to the in-person ABLE training class. As of December 2021, the department completed all requirements and became ABLE certified. We are also in the process of creating ABLE inspired signage to place at various locations around headquarters as reminders of the ABLE standards.



ABLE

Active Bystandership
for Law Enforcement

In 2021, all Officers also completed state mandated Integrating Communications, Assessment and Tactics (ICAT) training. ICAT use-of-force training is designed to fill a critical gap in training police officers in how to respond to volatile situations in which subjects are behaving erratically and often dangerously but do not possess a firearm. ICAT is anchored by a Critical Decision-Making Model that helps officers assess situations, make safe and effective decisions, and document and learn from their actions. (<https://www.policeforum.org/about-icat>).

ICAT focuses on four areas: patrol officer response; non-firearms incidents; Integration of crisis recognition/intervention, communications and tactics; and officer safety and wellness. As a reminder of ICAT and using the critical decision model (CDM) in assessing a situation, we have placed CDM signage in various locations at headquarters and the training facilities to remind officers.



Supervisor Response Vehicle

In 2091, we created a workgroup to explore ways to better prepare officers at the scene of a critical incident. The group was tasked to review vehicles and equipment that could be beneficial to an officer at the scene so that they would have immediate access to the equipment needed to resolve an incident or assist in life saving actions.

Acting on the recommendations, we purchased using Township funds, two Ford F250 pickup trucks for a Sergeant to operate with one truck assigned per shift so that a vehicle was always on the street and available. Each vehicle was outfitted identically with a storage cap and slide outs installed for easier access to equipment.

The equipment placed in each vehicles includes level III tactical shield, entry tool kit, HURST Law Enforcement strongArm battery operated hydraulic entry tool, 14 foot collapsible ladder, extra

rifle plate carriers, extra ballistic helmets, extra cases of handgun and rifle ammunition, a water rescue device, portable lighting systems, a less lethal pebberball launching system, case of road flares, extra flashlights, dog snare pole, extra traffic safety vest, pink incident management incident/detour signs, a portable shelter, crime scene barrier set, a pole camera, a night vision camera, crime scene tape, shovel, pike pole, oil dry container and a reeves stretcher.

Additionally each vehicle can serve as a command post with rear area radio and MDT installed so that the supervisor can manage an incident on scene until additional support vehicles arrive. A green flashing light was also installed atop each vehicle to assist in identifying it as the command post when activated.

Since 2019 when the vehicles were placed in service, they have been of great assistance on several critical incidents where there was no delay in deploying the equipment needed to resolve the incident as safely and quickly as possible.





Unmanned Aircraft System (UAV-Drone) Program

In 2019, the Gloucester Township Police Department purchased a DGI UAV. The program is overseen by a Sergeant and 7 Officers. All are FAA remote pilot certified. The UAV is used for many missions including critical/tactical incidents to identify potential threats that officers at ground level may not be aware of. The UAV is also used for identifying potential threats from natural or man-made disasters such as chemical spills, flooding, fires, building collapse or downed electrical areas where officers are able to maintain a safe distance in order to assess the incident and determine what assets may be needed to mitigate the issue. Additionally, the UAV is used to document motor vehicle crash and crime scenes to minimize the times that officers may be on a roadway gathering the scene evidence.



Tactical Robots

To increase officer safety during tactical incidents or other dangerous environments, the department purchased two Robotex tactical robots, an Avatar 1 in 2011 and an Avatar 2 in 2015. The robots are deployed during tactical incidents to allow team members to quickly and safely inspect interiors of buildings, suspicious packages. The robots may also be used by our incident management team to assess potential hazmat incidents. The robots have the ability to transit up and down stairways which is a necessary function when conducting a building search.

We also participate in the federal government 1033 Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) program for obtaining surplus government/military equipment at no cost. In 2020 we obtained an IRobot Packbot 510 multi-mission robot. The Packbot is a larger robot that is used for areas where the smaller Robotex models cannot access. The Packbot is equipped with a camera manipulator arm that holds a wide-angle/zoom camera with FLIR function. The robot has a second manipulator arm with a camera and gripper attached. The gripper is able to open doors and pick up/move objects.



Thermal Cameras

To assist our canine officers on suspect tracks at nighttime or in dark buildings, each canine officer was assigned a handheld SEEK thermal camera. The cameras detect heat in complete darkness which will help an officer locate someone attempting to hide or evade the canine.



Training/Education

The department has a Professional Development Bureau (PDB) that is responsible for training. The bureau is commanded by a Sergeant with three detectives assigned full time and several other officers assigned on a temporary basis as needed. The PDB coordinates all department training through the county police academy or through the department and conducts the biannual use of force and the quarterly PDT trainings.

Along with in service training that officers receive through our county police academy, we conduct our own quarterly Professional Development Training (PDT). The training is conducted in 6-8 hour blocks and all officers are required to attend. The training each year is varied with topics selected by command staff and the training cadre.

In addition to PDT training, all officers are required to attend use of force training biannually. The use of force training includes firearms, use of force, pursuit, related policy review, de-escalation techniques and other topics as determined.

Roll call training on current law enforcement incidents is conducted periodically with roll call bulletins issued to all officers through our policy management system. Supervisors also conduct their own roll call training on any topics that they deemed may be beneficial to their officers.

To aid in the leadership development, all supervisors from the Chief to the newest Sergeant have attended or are scheduled to attend the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) Command and Leadership academy. Supervisors attend the academy 1 day a week for 16 weeks. The academy focuses on leadership as a science; behavioral and motivational theories; stress management and adjustment; individual communication and counseling; inter-group conflict management and decision making in groups.

Lieutenants and above attend the FBI-LEEDA supervisor, command and executive leadership weeklong courses. The leadership trilogy focuses on topics and development in personality diagnostics, leadership case studies, mentoring, developing your people, performance management, risk management, credibility, trends in law enforcement, employee wellness, transformational leadership, social and emotional intelligence, dealing with problem employees and leading change within the organization.

FBI National Academy for Command Staff

Command staff have been selected and attended the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. The academy is a 10-week course for leaders of state, local, county, tribal, military, federal, and international law enforcement agencies. Attendance is by invitation only, through

a nomination process. Attendees are selected from every U.S. state and territory and from international partner nations. The National Academy program provides coursework in intelligence theory, terrorism and terrorist mindsets, management science, law, behavioral science, law enforcement communication, and forensic science.

After graduation, NA graduates and command staff attend annual New Jersey National Academy Association chapter 2 day re-trainer sessions as part of continuing education.

The Chief and both Deputy Chiefs have attended the academy. The three Captains are in the selection process, which was unfortunately delayed due to the pandemic.



Accreditation

In 2020, Chief Harkins made the decision to begin the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) law enforcement accreditation certification. The purpose for seeking accreditation was to improve overall agency performance by updating and implementing policies, procedures and standards that reflect professional best practices.

In August of 2021, the department began the accreditation process with The Rodgers Group contracted to assist. The accreditation process is predicted to take approximately 18 months. To ensure that the process timeline is maintained, a Sergeant was assigned as the full time accreditation manger and works directly with The Rodgers Group accreditation liaison.



Closing

Since becoming Chief of Police in 2019 and in the 9 years prior as Deputy Chief, Chief Harkins has made it a priority to ensure that the department is always striving to have the safest working environment through policy and procedures, equipment, training and employee wellness programs.

As a prior SWAT team commander, Chief Harkins knows the dangers of officer complacency and poor safety and tactics. He has empowered the command staff and first line supervisors with identifying safety issues and correcting them. If correcting an issue involved obtaining new or upgraded equipment, he has always worked with our Township Administrator and Finance Officer to identify funding sources so that we can proceed with purchasing. One of most recent purchases that came from an identified issue are the supervisor response vehicles.

Many of our programs can easily be replicated in similar or smaller agencies and we readily assists an agency when the request information on our programs.

It is for all of these reasons that I believe that our agency is worthy of the National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum, Destination Zero General Officer Safety Award.

Professionally,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian McKendry", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian McKendry
Deputy Chief of Police