

Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigations Division (Report Highlights)

September 2001

The Criminal Investigations Division provides statewide support to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The Division investigates narcotics trafficking, organized crime, vehicle theft, gangs, and computer and financial crimes, and gathers criminal intelligence.

Our Conclusions:

With more than half the Division's officers now assigned to multi-agency task forces, the Division needs to formalize its process for deciding when to participate on task forces and annually evaluate whether to continue its participation. In addition, the Division can improve its management and oversight of its non-task-force cases.

The Division Needs a Formal Process To Evaluate Task Force Participation

Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies form task forces to coordinate their efforts and pool manpower, experience, and equipment.

Formal process needed to help decide whether to join a task force—The process used now involves informal discussions and is undocumented. A better process would formally evaluate:

- The level of criminal activity being targeted;
- The mission and goals; and
- The project costs and benefits of participation.

Task Force Participation:

- Number of task forces = 28
- Officers assigned = 147
- Percentage of Division officers assigned = 52%
- Task forces administered by the Division = 2
- Costs to the Division = \$10.9 million per year

Additional supervisory policies needed—Many of the Division's officers are assigned to task forces that are administered and controlled by other agencies. The Division's supervision of these officers poses unique challenges since the officers may be working with officers from other agencies at off-site locations. DPS needs to develop additional policies on how to supervise officers assigned to task forces.

Process needed for evaluating continued participation on existing task forces—The Division has participated on some task forces for over 20 years. According to national standards:

- Special units tend to be self-perpetuating; and
- Continued participation should be formally reviewed annually.

While the Division receives monthly or annual reports on task force activities, it does not formally evaluate:

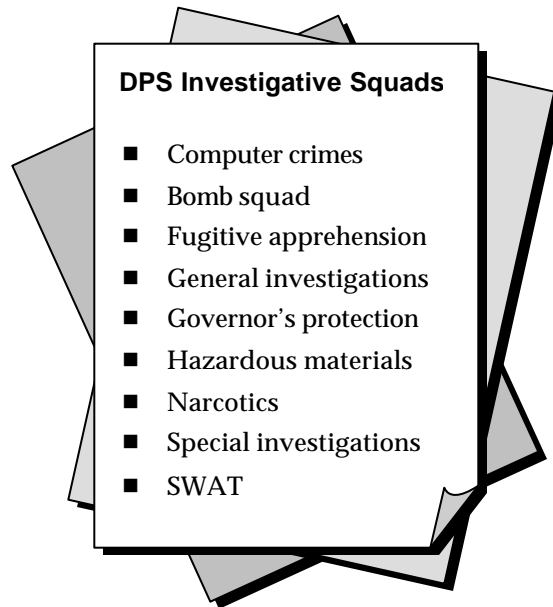
- The productivity of the Division's officers; and
- The overall performance of the entire task force.

The Division should:

- ✓ Develop and implement a formal process to help determine whether to participate on a task force;
- ✓ Develop and implement supervisory policies for task forces; and
- ✓ Develop and implement a formal assessment process to help determine whether to continue on a task force.

Case Management Practices Need Improvement

In addition to the officers assigned to task forces, the Division has numerous investigative squads comprising only DPS officers. These squads provide a range of investigative services statewide and assist other police agencies.



Case screening needed—Although DPS has limited investigative resources, it rarely declines cases when other law enforcement agencies request assistance. However:

- Some requests for assistance are for low-priority types of cases in relation to other statewide needs; and
- DPS does not have specific criteria for screening what types of cases to accept.

Case-screening criteria would help DPS make the most effective use of its limited resources and help other law enforcement agencies understand how their requests fit in with statewide enforcement priorities and needs.

Some cases not reviewed—A division policy requires supervisors to review active cases every 30 days. However, about 6 percent of active cases had not received a supervisory review in 90 days or more and some had not been reviewed for over 200 days.

Case files not completed—Once a case is closed, the file should contain at least an investigator narrative, suspect and witness

information, and case outcome information, and should then be sent to the records unit. However, 22 of 49 cases reviewed were incomplete. For example, one case that took over 10,000 hours has only a cover sheet and lab request form in the file.

Case management system missing information—DPS has an information system designed to track critical case data such as case type, hours expended, and case outcome. However, the system lacks complete and accurate information because:

- Until recently, some squads did not enter information on their cases;
- The system cannot accept some information on non-DPS cases, such as some task force cases, that DPS officers work on; and
- Some activities, such as apprehending fugitives, do not have a code reflecting the activity.

The Division should:

- ✓ Develop specific criteria for accepting cases;
- ✓ Enforce policies requiring supervisory review every 30 days and ensuring case files are complete;
- ✓ Enforce policies requiring investigators to input case information and return closed cases to the DPS' record unit; and
- ✓ Expand case outcome codes and provide additional training.

To Obtain More Information

- A copy of the full report can be obtained by calling (602) 553-0333 or by visiting our Web site at:

www.auditorgen.state.az.us

- The contact person for this report is **Dot Reinhard**.