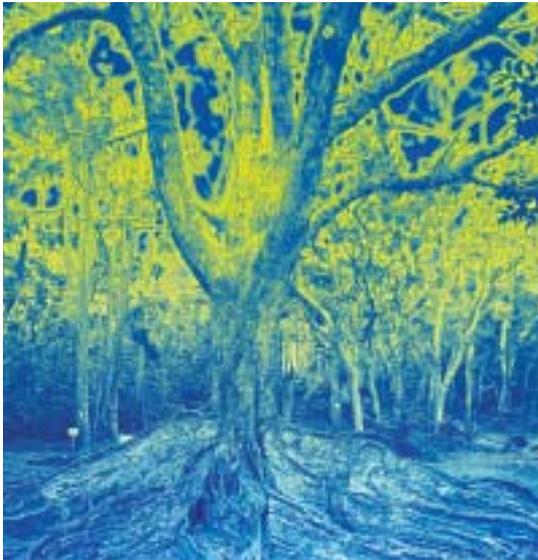


**C**ommunity-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) is quickly becoming the philosophy and daily practice of progressive police<sup>1</sup> agencies around the world. COPPS lies at the heart of contemporary policing. The problem-solving process, which is the core of COPPS, strikes at the roots of crime rather than hacks at its branches. It provides officers with a more comprehensive understanding of problems through in-depth analysis and guides them in the development of tailored and collaborative response strategies.



Police administrators have long recognized the ineffectiveness of incident-driven policing, as well as the economic insensibility of random patrol, rapid response and post-crime investigation. Racing from call to call, in spite of its appeal on television, does not promote effective policing. Responding to the same domestic dispute nightly or citing the same disorderly youths gathering in a park are ineffective strategies for resolving community problems.

A common concern voiced by police executives in COPPS implementation involves training, especially the training of new officers. This manual presents a Police Training Officer (PTO) program for new officers, which incorporates contemporary adult educational methods and a version of problem-based learning (PBL) adapted for police.

“COPPS lies at the heart  
of contemporary  
policing”

<sup>1</sup> The term “police” is meant to refer to all law enforcement practitioners at municipal, county and state agencies.

This approach to training provides a foundation for life-long learning that prepares the new officer for the complexities of policing today and in the future.

This manual is not based on developing mechanical training or rote skills commonly found in traditional field training officer (FTO) programs. While static skills are a necessity in police work and are integral to any training program, they constitute only one set of many skills needed in contemporary policing. This manual focuses on the officer's learning capacity and problem-solving skills as opposed to his or her rote performance capabilities. This manual offers agencies an invaluable tool for helping trainees learn to perform their duties and responsibilities in a more efficient, effective and equitable manner.



During the research for this project, police administrators and training practitioners identified two primary issues with current field training programs: lack of fundamental change and the protection against liability. There was strong criticism that field training programs had not changed significantly during the past 30 years in spite of an array of educational and policing advancements. For example, many unsuccessful attempts have been made to update field training programs by adding elements of COPPS as behavioral anchors. Police trainers report that, more often than not, these new behavioral anchors were considered add-on tasks and simply ignored.

“**static skills** constitute **only one** set of **many skills** needed in **contemporary policing**”

The second issue police executives recognized was liability protection. Traditional FTO programs exist largely for the purpose of limiting an agency's liability due to poor training or lack of training. The design of these programs addressed the issue of liability often at the expense of effective learning opportunities. Legal research indicates that police agencies' concern about liabilities is largely unfounded. There have been very few court cases to justify a focus on documentation and evaluation. An emphasis on effective training reaps more benefits and provides the protection against liability that agencies continue to seek. In short, this model speaks to both identified themes, incorporating contemporary COPPS concepts and guarding against liability through an emphasis on training.

“effective  
training  
protects against  
liability”

## a new model

**R**esearchers and police practitioners developed this manual to identify the key areas required in a contemporary training program. Administrators, training officers, and other law enforcement officers from across the country participated in all stages of this program's development. Project staff met with experts from various disciplines, conducted a nationwide survey of more than 400 police agencies, and reviewed dozens of police training manuals. Researchers also examined field training systems from numerous police agencies across the United States and Canada.

## TERMS REFERENCED IN THE TEXT

The Reno Police Training Officer model is based on the teaching principles of problem-based learning (PBL), and emphasizes the need for the Police Training Officer (PTO) to function primarily as a trainer rather than as an evaluator of the new officer.

PBL is well grounded in the fields of medicine and education, where it facilitates the transfer of knowledge. Similarly, in policing, trainees need to learn much more than just laws and police procedures. They must also understand how to apply their academy knowledge effectively when dealing with individuals and issues within a community.

As demands on police continue to increase, agencies must provide officers with the resources and the training to fulfill their expanded role. It also makes good sense to have police trainees thinking about their roles and responsibilities as they approach specific problems in their daily work. Problem solving is an integral part of police work and requires a creative and flexible method of thinking — thinking that the PTO model encourages.

**BOE** Board of Evaluators

**COPPS** Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving

**CPTED** Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

**CTR** Coaching and Training Report

**FTO** Field Training Officer

**LAP** Learning Activity Package

**NPE** Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise

**PBL** Problem-Based Learning

**PBLE** Problem-Based Learning Exercise

**PTE** Police Training Evaluator

**PTO** Police Training Officer

**PTS** Police Training Supervisor

**SARA** Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment

**SOP** Standard Operating Procedure

## frequently asked questions about the pto model

### Why create a new training program?

Traditional field training models do not address adult learning styles or contemporary evaluation techniques. This model does.

The traditional field training models predominantly rely on training officer evaluations to modify new officers' behavior and to protect the agency from liability, but do so at the expense of effective training. Evaluation and liability concerns are important, but by focusing on the trainee's needs, agencies will not only improve performance, they will also protect themselves from training-related liability.

### Why change the name?

This model uses the term Police Training Officer (PTO). This change in language away from the military terminology of *field training* reflects the movement toward community-oriented policing and problem solving.

### What does an agency do to implement this program?

Agencies implementing this program will

- Philosophically support and educate trainees and PTOs in community-oriented policing and problem solving;

### THIS MODEL MUST INCLUDE THESE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:

- Trainees must apply the learning matrix in each element of the program
- Trainees must complete daily journal entries
- Trainees must complete weekly Coaching and Training Reports (CTRs)
- Trainees must perform a Problem-Based Learning Exercise (PBLE) throughout each phase of the training
- Trainees must perform a Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE) throughout the PTO program

- Expose command staff and supervisors to the model prior to implementation;
- Educate trainees and PTOs in the principles of problem-based learning;
- Introduce trainees to the model before their entering the PTO program. (The academy would be an ideal environment in which to prepare the trainee); and
- Train the PTO supervisors and PTOs in the new model using a certified 40-hour training program.

**How does an agency evaluate trainees during this program?**

Evaluation takes place in a number of ways, including the following:

- Informal assessment of daily activities through completing daily journal entries and dialogue
- Weekly Coaching and Training Reports (CTRs)
- Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBLEs) in each of the four phases
- Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE)
- Week-long Mid-Term Evaluation
- Week-long Final Evaluation
- Board of Evaluators' (BOE) assessment of trainee, if recommended by departmental policy



traditional field training models

**do not address** adult learning styles

or contemporary evaluation **techniques.**

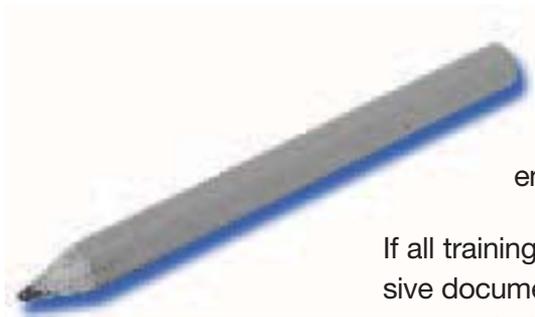
**this model does**



**What do agencies do if the trainee fails to progress during training?**

Adults learn at different rates and in various ways. Several strategies can be used to support trainee development in this model. Training officers learn to facilitate a variety of learning styles. This model encourages the PTO to seek the best method for each trainee.

The PBL process develops critical thinking and problem solving. These processes assist the trainer and the trainee in exploring other methods of developing competency. These include the use of reading and research assignments called Learning Activity Packages (LAPs), additional Problem-Based Learning Exercises, and focused training in areas in which the recruit experiences difficulty.



If all training resources fail, the agency has extensive documentation developed throughout the process to terminate the employee.

**Is this just touchy-feely stuff that ignores real police work?**

Define real *police work*. Is it catching bad guys, handing out speeding tickets, and breaking up bar fights? The Reno PTO program teaches officers to do those things. Is real policing dealing with gangs, helping victims, and going to court? If that is your definition, then this model will serve that purpose. No matter how you define real police work, this training program will help trainees perform their duties and responsibilities in the most effective way possible.

**So how does it work on a day-to-day basis?**

The trainee and trainer answer calls, patrol their beat, and work with the community much as they have always done. In this model, the trainees use those experiences to solve various problems

“so how does it work?”

## OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

- To formulate learning opportunities for new officers that meet or exceed the training needs of both the community and the policing agency
- To develop and enhance the trainee's learning from the academy within the community environment through a series of *real-life* problem-solving activities
- To foster a growing independence from the Police Training Officer over the course of the program
- To produce graduates of the training program who are capable of providing responsible, community-focused police services
- To prepare trainees to use a problem-solving approach throughout their careers by employing problem-based learning training
- To promote the practice of using community members as partners in problem solving
- To design fair and consistent evaluations that address a trainee's skills, knowledge, application, and ability to problem solve effectively

assigned by the trainer. Those assigned problems, called Problem-Based Learning Exercises, train the recruit to think critically and develop partnerships within the community.

This manual presents the PTO model to Police Training Officers, and is intended for use in their classroom instruction and as a resource when training new officers. It begins with an introduction of problem-based learning, which underlies the PTO model. Chapter 2 outlines the composition of the PTO program, including its phase structure and evaluation elements. Duties and responsibilities of program personnel are explored in Chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, 7, and 8 detail the four phases of training in the model. These chapters include trainer copies of three necessary evaluation and teaching tools used in the program: the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise, the Problem-Based Learning Exercise, and the weekly Coaching and Training Report. Chapters 6 and 9 guide the trainer through the Mid-Term and Final Evaluation components of the model. The manual concludes with appendices containing evaluation forms and Learning Activity Packages.

“no matter how you **define real** police work, this **training** program will **help trainees perform** their duties”