

# Ten Principles of Community Policing

## 1. Philosophy and Organizational Strategy

Community policing is both a philosophy (a way of thinking) and an organizational strategy (a way to carry out the philosophy) that allows the police and the community to work closely together in creative ways to solve the problems of crime, illicit drugs, fear of crime, physical and social disorder (from graffiti to addiction), neighborhood decay, and the overall quality of life in the community. The philosophy rests on the belief that people deserve input into the police process, in exchange for their participation and support. It also rests on the belief that solutions to today's community problems demand freeing both people and the police to explore creative, new ways to address neighborhood concerns beyond a narrow focus on individual crime incidents.

## 2. Commitment to Community Empowerment

Community policing's organizational strategy first demands that everyone in the police department, including both civilian and sworn personnel, must investigate ways to translate the philosophy of power-sharing into practice. This demands making a subtle but sophisticated shift so that everyone in the department understands the need to focus on solving community problems in creative, and often ways, that can include challenging and enlightening people in the process of policing themselves. Community policing implies a shift within the department that grants greater autonomy (freedom to make decisions) to line officer, which also implies enhanced respect for their judgment as police professionals. Within the community, citizens must share in the rights and responsibilities implicit in identifying, prioritizing, and solving problems, as full-fledged partners with the police.

## 3. Decentralized and Personalized Policing

To implement true community policing, police departments must also create and develop a new breed of line officer who acts as a direct link between the police and the people in the community. As the department's community outreach specialists, community policing officers must be freed from the isolation of the patrol car and the demands of the police radio so that they can maintain daily, direct, face-to-face contact with the people they serve in a clearly defined beat area. Ultimately, all officers should practice the community policing approach.

## 4. Immediate and Long-Term Proactive Problem Solving

The community policing officer's broad role demands continuous, sustained contact with the law-abiding people in the community, so that together they can explore creative new solutions to local concerns, with private citizens serving as supporters and as volunteers. As law enforcement officers, community policing officers respond to calls for service and make arrests, but they also go beyond this narrow focus to develop and monitor broad-based, long-term initiatives that can involve all elements of the community in efforts to improve the quality of life. As the community's ombudsman, the community policing officer also acts as a link to other public and private agencies that can help in a given situation.

## 5. Ethics, Legality, Responsibility and Trust

Community policing implies a new contract between the police and the citizens they serve, one that offers hope of overcoming widespread apathy while restraining any impulse of vigilantism. This new relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, also suggests that the police can serve as a catalyst, challenging people to accept their share of responsibility for the overall quality of life in the community. Community policing means that citizens will be asked to handle more of their minor concerns themselves, but in exchange, this will free police to work with people on developing immediate as well as long-term solutions for community concerns in ways that encourage mutual accountability and respect.

#### 6. Expanding the Police Mandate

Community policing adds a vital, proactive element to the traditional reactive role of the police, resulting in full-spectrum policing service. As the only agency of social control open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the police must maintain the ability to respond immediately to crises and crime incidents, but community policing broadens the police role so that they can make a greater impact on making changes today that hold the promise of making communities safer and more attractive places to live tomorrow.

#### 7. Helping Those with Special Needs

Community policing stresses exploring new ways to protect and enhance the lives of those who are most vulnerable--juveniles, the elderly, minorities, the poor, the disabled, the homeless. It both assimilates and broadens the scope of previous outreach efforts such as crime prevention and police community relations.

#### 8. Grass-Roots Creativity and Support

Community policing promotes the judicious use of technology, but it also rests on the belief that nothing surpasses what dedicated human beings, talking and working together, can achieve. It invests trust in those who are on the frontlines together on the street, relying on their combined judgment, wisdom, and experience to fashion creative new approaches to contemporary community concerns.

#### 9. Internal Change

Community policing must be a fully integrated approach that involves everyone in the department, with community policing officers serving as generalists who bridge the gap between the police and the people they serve. The community policing approach plays a crucial role internally by providing information about and awareness of the community and its problems, and by enlisting broad-based community support for the department's overall objectives. Once community policing is accepted as the long-term strategy, all officers should practice it. This could take as long as ten to fifteen years.

#### 10. Building for the Future

Community policing provides decentralized, personalized police service to the community. It recognizes that the police cannot impose order on the community from the outside, but that people must be encouraged to think of the police as a resource that they can use in helping to solve contemporary community concerns. It is not a tactic to be applied and then abandoned, but a new philosophy and organizational strategy that provides the flexibility to meet local needs and priorities as they change over time.

Trojanowicz, Robert & Bucqueroux, Bonnie (1990). Community Policing: a Contemporary Perspective. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Co.