

Internal Audit Report



Aurora Police Department – Property and Evidence Audit





Contents

Auditor’s Conclusion 4
Audit Profile 6
Milestone 2 7
Milestone 3 9
Milestone 4 10
Fieldwork 11
 Appendix A – Sample Selection..... 13
 Appendix B – Property and Evidence Unit Culture..... 14
 Appendix C – Survey Scores and Auditor Conclusions 26

Auditor's Conclusion

June 24, 2020

Internal Audit has completed the Aurora Police Department– Property and Evidence Audit. We conducted this engagement as part of our 2020 Annual Audit Plan.

The audit objectives were to:

- Ensure compliance with CALEA Standard 84 – Property and Evidence Control.
 - An annual audit of property and evidence, in compliance with Appendix K, is conducted by a supervisor not routinely or directly connected with control of property and evidence.
- Ensure the reliability and integrity of internal controls that ensure the chain of custody for property and evidence is not broken.

Internal controls consist of all the measures taken by management to:

- Protect its resources against accidental loss, waste, fraud, and inefficiency;
- Ensure the completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and reliability of accounting and operating data;
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws; regulations; and internal policies and procedures;
- Promote efficient and effective operations; and,
- Monitor the achievement of management's goals and objectives.

Internal Audit conducted the procedures for each engagement objective, as stated below. Internal Audit issued separate conclusions on each objective, as stated below.

Objective 1: Ensure compliance with CALEA Standard 84 – Property and Evidence Control.

- Internal Audit tested a sample of items from the inventory system and items held in storage. The testing ensured that items were properly submitted, documented, packaged, stored, moved, secured, purged, and disposed of in accordance with the prevailing standards, directives, policies, and procedures.

Per CALEA Standard 84.1.6, (t)he annual audit should be a significant representative sampling of property including high-risk items (defined as money, precious metals, jewelry, firearms, and drugs.) CALEA standards (per newly issued guidance) require a two-tailed random sampling method to be applied to high-risk items. If the agency has 100 or more high-risk items, then the annual audit should review a representative sample of 100 risk items (Appendix K).

It is our conclusion, based upon the results of our engagement procedures, that the City of Aurora Police Department Business Services Division – Property and Evidence Unit has complied with CALEA standard 84.1.6 and Appendix K.

Objective 2: Ensure the reliability and integrity of internal controls that ensure the chain of custody for property and evidence is not broken.

- Internal Audit obtained, reviewed, and evaluated CALEA Property and Evidence Standards, City of Aurora Police Policies and Procedure Directives and Manuals, and other materials related to best practices in property and evidence management.
- We documented the chain of custody process to ensure that sufficient internal controls are present to deter fraud, misuse, and abuse.
- We observed the state of the physical facilities and the practices of the property and evidence staff to ensure compliance with stated policies and procedures.

It is our conclusion, based upon the results of our engagement procedures, that controls are operating effectively, ensuring the chain of custody for property and evidence is intact.

P&E continues to operate efficiently and effectively. The facilities at headquarters are currently under construction, adding more storage and office space for the Unit. The Unit has added an additional drug trailer that is currently being fitted for shelving and use, freeing up space in the current trailer. The Unit is also making progress toward having an incinerator in operation. This will greatly improve drug destruction efforts. The automatic disposal notifications and automatic check in/out processes have also been working well. Internal Audit is impressed by the annual progress.

Wayne C Sommer

Wayne C. Sommer, CPA, CGMA
Internal Audit Manager

Audit Profile

Audit Team

Wayne Sommer, CPA, CGMA – Manager

Michelle Crawford, M.Acct, CIA, CFE, CRMA – Engagement Supervisor

Sheree Van Buren, CIA – Lead Auditor

Background

Internal Audit conducts this annual engagement to review controls that ensure the chain of custody is unbroken. It is a requirement for the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) accreditation.

Scope

The scope of our work covers January 1 - December 31, 2019.

Milestone Reports

Milestone 1 Entrance Conference Memo Letter
Milestone 2 Client Evaluation
Milestone 3 Process Controls and Efficiency
Milestone 4 Risks
Fieldwork

Issued Date

January 29, 2020
June 24, 2020
June 24, 2020
June 24, 2020
June 24, 2020



Milestone 2 Report
Aurora Police Department – Property and Evidence Unit

June 24, 2020

BACKGROUND

In Milestone 2, we gain a deeper understanding of the client's operating environment and client issues that may affect the engagement objectives, and that may influence subsequent engagement procedures. We accomplish this by reviewing policies and procedures, performance measures, statistics, and administering culture and customer service surveys.

PROCEDURES	CONCLUSIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Review policies and procedures</i>	We recommend that Management finalize their SOPs. See ISS.1 below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Review performance measures</i>	Property and Evidence (P&E) have relevant performance measures in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Issue culture survey</i>	We believe there are areas where the Unit has an opportunity to improve the current environment. The culture assessment is documented in Appendix B and C.

Internal Audit Recommendation

Final Policies and Procedures

Internal Audit reviewed the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the 2019 audit. We noted that there are several policies and procedures (SOPs) that are in the 'final draft' stages¹. Per discussion with Lt. Lesnansky, the SOPs are in final draft form because the documents are awaiting a signature from the City Attorney's office. During the prior audit, the same SOPs were in 'final draft' as well.

Documented policies and procedures provide written standards and guidelines for Unit compliance. SOPs not only provide direction and understanding to a staff of their activities, but they provide a knowledge transfer as current Property and Evidence staff leave the Unit.

Recommendation

We recommend the Aurora Police Department work with the City Attorney's Office to receive their sign-off on the final SOPs.

Management Response

As of May 25, 2020, Unit Management has finalized and uploaded the SOPs that were in 'final draft' state. Management has also begun revisions to SOP 305 "DNA" and has determined SOP 101 "Functional Supervision" is no longer required, as the procedures are covered by other SOPs.

Estimated Implementation Date: July 30, 2020

¹ The SOPs that are still in 'final draft' form are: 100, 102, 200, 202, 203, 204, 205, 300, 301, 302, and 304.



**Milestone 3 Report
Aurora Police Department Property and Evidence Unit**

June 24, 2020

Internal Controls

In Milestone 3, we determine whether appropriate process controls exist for key processes and whether processes are efficient. We accomplish this by flowcharting and performing walkthroughs of key processes, and identifying missing controls and process inefficiencies.

PROCEDURES	CONCLUSIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Flowchart key processes. Evaluate key processes for missing or weak internal controls; efficiency issues; and IT related issues.</i> 	<p>We flowcharted and evaluated the processes related to the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence drop-off • Intake and storage • Release and return to courts • Officer check in/out • Release to owner • Disposal and interdepartmental transfers • Inventory process <p>Our review did not identify missing or weak internal controls or inefficient processes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Determine any impact on fieldwork procedures.</i> 	<p>There is no impact on the planned fieldwork procedures.</p>



**Milestone 4 Report
Aurora Police Department Property and Evidence Unit**

June 24, 2020

Risk

In Milestone 4, we assess the impact of identified risks on the engagement objectives, scope and planned test work procedures. We accomplish this by discussing risk in key areas with the client and comparing to leading practices.

PROCEDURES	CONCLUSIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assess IT Risk</i>	We assessed IT risk and no additional IT risks were identified. During fieldwork, Internal Audit verifies the system information to the physical inventory and vice versa, assessing the accuracy of record keeping within Versadex. We also assess the check-in/check-out report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assess Governance Risk</i>	We assessed the governance level as excellent. There are formal procedures in place for the governance of the unit. The processes are comprehensive and operating effectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assess Fraud Risk</i>	We did not identify any additional fraud risks or general risks that would impact the planned audit objectives or fieldwork procedures.



**Fieldwork Report
Aurora Police Department – Property and Evidence
Audit**

June 24, 2020

Fieldwork

In Fieldwork, we obtain sufficient competent evidential matter to afford a reasonable basis for conclusions on the engagement objectives. We accomplish this by performing tests, data analysis, and any other means necessary.

Objectives	Conclusions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure compliance with CALEA Standard 84 – Property and Evidence Control.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>An annual audit of property and evidence, in compliance with Appendix K, is conducted by a supervisor not routinely or directly connected with control of property and evidence.</i> 	<p>Internal Audit did not identify any exceptions during the inventory procedures. The chain of custody appears to be intact, and the Unit appears to be in compliance with CALEA Standard 84.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure the reliability and integrity of internal controls that ensure the chain of custody for property and evidence is not broken.</i> 	<p>The controls in place at the Property and Evidence Unit appear to be operating effectively, ensuring the chain of custody for property and evidence remains intact.</p>

Internal Audit Recommendation

Disposal of Checked Out Property

During the 2017 engagement, Internal Audit reported a significant control weakness over checked out property. We recommended P&E Management obtain legal guidance on their liability for the transfer of custody and recommended Management implement the necessary controls to better monitor officer property check outs. In 2018, P&E worked with Information Technology to create automated checked-out property e-mail notifications and reporting.

This year, Internal Audit reviewed the "officer checked out property report" and noted that all but eight items had been returned to P&E custody. These eight items related to cases from 2014 – 2016 and were classified as non-high-risk "articles" (photos, statements, CDs, DVDs, flash drives, etc.). The P&E research notes indicate the items may have been disposed of or the officer has no recollection of the items' status. The check in/out control is operating as intended, however, P&E should address these remaining items to ensure an accurate inventory.

Recommendation

Obtain the necessary approvals to appropriately dispose of the Versadex records of the eight noted items. Should the officers return the items, P&E can take the steps required to reinstate the property back into custody.

Management Response

As of May 26, 2020, this recommendation has been implemented.

*Implementation Date: **IMPLEMENTED***

Appendix A – Sample Selection

In accordance with CALEA sampling standards, we employed a two-tailed random sampling method. Appendix K, "Sample Size Determination for Annual Property and Evidence Audits", states that "if the agency has 100 or more high-risk items, then the annual audit should review a representative sample of 100 high-risk items".

For 2019, the Property and Evidence Unit had 32,568 items classified as high-risk. Using our audit software, we randomly selected 100 high-risk and 20 non-high-risk items from Versadex (inventory system) for our test. During the testing, we selected an additional 100 high-risk and 20 non-high-risk items from Property and Evidence storage areas. This method leads to Internal Audit testing a grand total of 200 high-risk and 40 non-high-risk items.

Although there is no CALEA requirement to audit non-high-risk inventory, Internal Audit includes an additional sample of non-high-risk articles as a part of our testwork to ensure that the chain of custody is intact regardless of property type. These items would not affect the Units' appendix K compliance.

In the two-tailed aspect of the test conditions of high-risk items, a sampling error exceeding 4% would require a 100% inventory on all high-risk items and additional sampling of other items.

The two conditions we tested for were:

1. Items in the system are also physically in inventory; and,
2. Items on the inventory shelves are accurately reflected in the system, including data adjustments we discover as part of our test work.

For purposes of our test work, an exception was any item in our sample which could not be located on the inventory shelves within the fieldwork period or any item physically located on the inventory shelves but not accurately reflected in Versadex.

We pulled a sample of items for testing condition (1) above; while testing an item for condition (1) we randomly selected a corresponding physical item from the inventory location and traced it back into the system.

2019 Inventory Data:

**Classified as high-risk items.

Item Type	Number of Items in Versadex
Articles	346,885
Securities**	4,117
Bikes	63
Alcohol	170
Jewelry**	2,730
Firearms**	4,036
Drugs**	21,685
Total Property	<u>379,686</u>
High-Risk Property**	<u>32,568</u>

Since Internal Audit did not identify any exceptions during the inventory procedures we conclude that:

- the chain of custody appears to be intact, and
- the Property and Evidence Unit appears to be in compliance with CALEA Standard 84.

Internal Audit provided Property and Evidence Management with recommendations relating to disposal of checked out property, standard operating procedure updates, and improving the teamwork culture among Unit staff.

Appendix B – Property and Evidence Unit Culture

In 2019, Internal Audit recommended the Property and Evidence (P&E) Leadership Team focus on communication, setting goals as a team, and including staff in decision making (where feasible) to move the Unit toward a Participative system of management.²

According to the Leadership Team, despite efforts made throughout the year, the culture has regressed within the last six months. They felt that a reassessment might identify shortfalls in their efforts. We noted decreases in the ratings for each category from last year's survey. We have highlighted the comparison throughout this assessment and issued recommendations for how the Unit can improve its culture.

Throughout the report, content borrowed from external research is in italics and, when in the body of the text, is indented and referenced in footnotes.

The Culture: Background and Survey

Corporate culture refers to the shared values, attitudes, standards, and beliefs that characterize members of an organization and define its nature.

Culture resides in the perception of employees. If employees believe the culture is x, y, or z, that's what it is, and they will act accordingly.³ What is typically called a "toxic culture" is most often a confused culture. Culture becomes confusing when different aspects of your organization communicate conflicting messages. For example, onboarding information for employees does not match guidance given in management training; or, leaders' behaviors do not match expected employee behaviors.

To assess the culture within a department or division, Internal Audit employs a survey based on Rensis Likert's Four Systems of Management.⁴ (See graphic below.) We designed the questions to capture staff's perceptions along a sliding scale about various aspects of department culture.

The survey questions fall within the following categories and offer opportunities for elaboration.

- Leadership
- Motivation
- Teamwork
- Communication / Interaction
- Decision Making
- Goal Setting
- Control
- Team Work
- Core 4 and Other Matters (These questions were not part of Likert's original work; some are from Gallup's Employee Engagement Survey.)

² Internal Audit modeled our survey after Rensis Likert's Four Systems of Management. Likert studied people, group dynamics, values, and management styles, developing his theory on the systems of management. We discuss survey development further in the next section. <https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/tag/likerts-four-management-systems/>

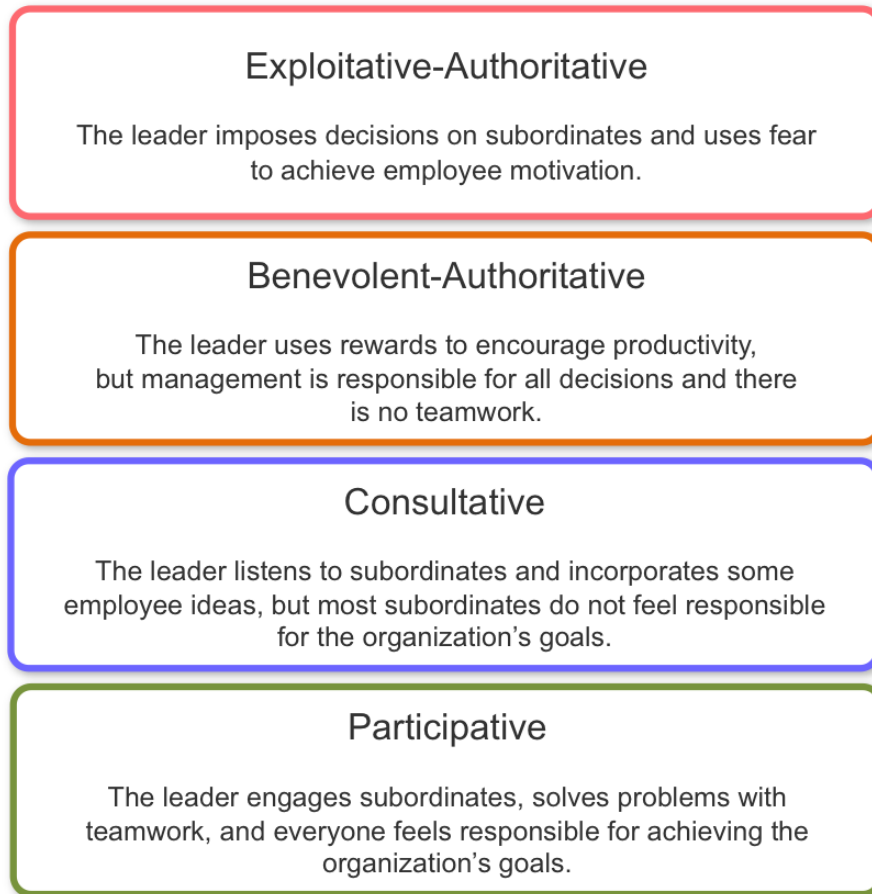
³ <https://iaonline.theiia.org/2019/Pages/Auditing-Culture-History-and-Principles.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/tag/likerts-four-management-systems/>; we also adapted the survey from work performed by the Commonwealth Centers for High-Performance Organizations (CCHPO).

Likert advocated for the Participative management system. *“Participative management is based on trust and confidence in employees. Goals are determined collectively and form a basis for motivation and rewards. This fosters a collective sense of responsibility for meeting company goals and incentivizes collaborative teamwork and open communication.”*⁵ These attributes contribute to staff having positive attitudes and producing quality work.

The Four Systems of Management

Rensis Likert



We issued the survey to 15 Property and Evidence “staff” and received 12 complete responses, a completion rate of 80%⁶. Of the 12 responses, three were from the Property Custodian, Property Supervisor, and Property Lieutenant. We would like to emphasize that the survey results and comments reflect the staff's perceptions. The survey included opportunities for respondents to provide feedback or further explanations for their answers.

When we identified more than one similar comment, we summarized them in relevant sections of our analysis below.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The survey was issued February 24, 2020 and was closed on March 9, 2020.

Perception is not reality, but, admittedly, perception can become a person's reality (there is a difference) because perception has a potent influence on how we look at reality.⁷

By identifying and addressing staff perceptions and misperceptions, leadership can take steps to establish a culture that can improve its effectiveness and increase employee satisfaction and engagement. Our analysis of the survey results follows. Appendix C includes complete survey scores and Auditor's conclusions.

Our Analysis of the Survey Results

Internal Audit uses these terms throughout the report as defined below:

- Leadership Team: Property Supervisor, Custodian, and Lieutenant
- Staff: All Property and Evidence Unit staff (inclusive of the Leadership Team)

Healthy organizations have several common cultural characteristics⁸.

- (1) *Positive tone at the top: Executive Management works to define the organization's values and proactively emphasizes and models those values, ensuring strategies are consistent with the values, and holding management accountable to executing their duties within the organization's risk appetite.*
- (2) *Clear communication: Management reinforces the values and culture through clear communication of expectations across the organization. Methods include formal communications, day-to-day interactions, and meetings with employees.*
- (3) *Open dialogue: Management actively gathers and listens to feedback. All levels are open to constructive criticism and problem solving. Methods for obtaining information from second- and third-line functions include inputs from well-received and acknowledged employee suggestion/question programs, ethics hotlines, open door policies, employee events and meetings, and more.*
- (4) *Employee engagement: All employees (to the extent possible) are engaged in objective setting and strategy discussions. In larger organizations this may be accomplished through two primary methods: input into setting their own personal goals and objectives; and understanding of how those individual goals and objectives align with the overall organization's strategy and objectives. When employees are engaged in objective setting it improves the probability that they are supportive of the objectives and strategies.*
- (5) *Incentives aligned with core values: All employees' compensation, variable compensation, promotions, and other talent management are governed by a clear understanding of the organization's core values and its risk appetite.*

⁷ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-power-prime/201908/perception-is-not-reality>

⁸ Auditing Culture Practice Guide, International Professional Practices Framework, The Institute of Internal Auditors Global, November 2019, page 5

These characteristics contribute to a positive and open culture, one that clearly defines the beliefs, values, and norms of the organization.

Leadership

Good leadership creates engaged employees and that leadership influences a variety of outcomes such as personnel turnover, customer satisfaction, and productivity.⁹

The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and in all relationships within the organization, each member, in light of his/her background, values, desires, and expectations, will view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his/her sense of personal worth and importance.¹⁰

Survey questions in the Leadership section focused on staff’s perceptions regarding management’s confidence in their work and their comfort level in discussing job-related issues with management. It also included how often their ideas and opinions were sought and used by management.

The respondents perceive that the Leadership Team shows substantial but not complete confidence in their work and, only sometimes seeks their ideas. Staff feels comfortable talking to the Leadership Team about issues related to their job.

When asked to provide examples of where the Leadership Team performs well, staff shared some of the following comments:

- The Leadership Team is very supportive and encouraging.
- They provide guidance and constructive criticism when needed.
- The Leadership Team helps staff get certain trainings to help further their knowledge.
- They are willing to research and find answers to their questions.

When asked to provide examples of where the Leadership Team can improve, staff shared a consensus on better communication. When the Unit makes changes, the Leadership Team should ensure that all staff, regardless of warehouse or headquarters assignment, receives that communication. Staff also shared that the Leadership Team’s trust level of staff decision-making could be improved. Opportunities for improvement could include giving staff a task and allowing them to complete that task without interfering, trusting that if staff have a question, they will come to the Leadership Team for guidance.

The Leadership Team will want to brainstorm how to communicate with all P&E staff better. We discuss communication further in this report.

Leadership¹¹	2019	2020	Score Δ (change)	% Δ (change)
Scores	9.12	8.42	-0.70	-8%

⁹ <https://global.theiia.org/knowledge/Public%20Documents/TaT-February-2016.pdf> ; Institute of Internal Auditors, *More Than Just Setting the Tone*

¹⁰ The Human Organization; Likert, Rensis; 1967, McGraw-Hill; page 47.

¹¹ The beige tables throughout the report show the year over year change for each section.

Motivation

Workplace recognition motivates, provides a sense of accomplishment and makes employees feel valued for their work. Recognition not only boosts individual employee engagement, but it also has been found to increase productivity and loyalty to the company, leading to higher retention.¹²

A substantial body of research findings demonstrates that the greater the loyalty of members of a group towards the group, the greater is the motivation among the members to achieve the goals of the group, and the greater is the probability that the group will achieve its goals.¹³

Motivation questions targeted methodologies for motivating and recognizing staff.

Staff perception is that occasional rewards and some threats or punishment are the predominant methods used for motivation on the job. Staff also perceive greater involvement in decision making as a motivation method. They also perceive that the Leadership Team bears responsibility for achieving department goals; however, staff should have a substantial portion of responsibility.

The principle of supportive relationships is a general principle which the members of an organization can use to guide their relationships with one another. The more fully this principle is applied throughout the organization, the greater will be the extent to which (1) the motivational forces arising from noneconomic motives of members and from their economic needs will be harmonious and compatible and (2) the motivational forces within each individual will result in cooperative behavior focused on achieving organizational goals.¹⁴

Recognition plays a central role in building supportive relationships. Beyond communicating appreciation and providing motivation to the recognized employee, the act of recognition also sends messages to other employees about what success looks like. In this way, recognition is both a tool for personal reward and an opportunity to reinforce the desired culture of the organization to other employees. The best managers promote a recognition-rich environment, with praise coming from every direction and everyone aware of how others like to receive appreciation.¹⁵

People who are working toward a mutually agreed upon objective require less external motivation.¹⁶

¹² <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236441/employee-recognition-low-cost-high-impact.aspx?version=print>

¹³ Likert, page 64.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 47.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Auditing Culture Practice Guide, International Professional Practices Framework, The Institute of Internal Auditors Global, November 2019, page 5

When asked if they had been recognized or praised for good work during the last seven days, 50% of staff responded, "Yes," and 50% of staff responded, "No." The Leadership Team should consider ways to increase more frequent recognition of all staff in the Unit.

P&E plays a significant role in ensuring the continuity of custody and the protection of property and evidence. Staff were evenly split on whether the City's mission makes them feel their job is important. Even though they may face rigorous daily tasks, it is important to remind staff of the purpose and mission of the Unit. This purpose correlates with the mission of APD and, therefore, the City. Each technician's role is a vital part of fulfilling the mission. The Leadership Team will want to brainstorm ideas to promote the mission to staff consistently and meaningfully.

When asked what best motivates them in their job, the staff shared that just getting the job done in a quiet work environment motivates them. They also shared that recognition, working with each other, being respected for ideas, and meeting disposal goals motivates them.

Motivation	2019	2020	Score Δ (change)	% Δ (change)
Scores	7.26	5.94	-1.32	-18%

Communication and Interaction

Different communication styles and ineffective use of communication tools are contributing to the lack of clarity about responsibilities that is evident in the research, and certainly adding to workplace stress levels.¹⁷

Questions for this section focused on perceptions of cooperation within the Unit and between the Unit and other departments. They also addressed communication flow and quality, as well as the degree of interaction between staff and the Leadership Team, including the Business Services Manager.

Perceptions about communication and interaction can be gauges of the level of trust between staff and the Leadership Team. Staff reported that they mostly provide accurate information upward but sometimes may hold back information. Staff perception is that information flows mainly from the top-down, with some bottom-up information flow. Ideally, the information should flow freely from the top-down, from the bottom-up, horizontally across the Unit, and between the Unit and other departments.

Staff perception is that communication from the Leadership Team is often accepted, but at times viewed with suspicion, and may or may not be openly questioned. Staff also perceive that those above them have a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of their problems. Staff perception leans toward moderate genuine interactions, and some mutual trust shared between them and the Leadership Team.

¹⁷ https://eiuperspectives.economist.com/sites/default/files/EIU_Lucidchart-Communication%20barriers%20in%20the%20modern%20workplace.pdf

Staff report often interacting with the Unit Lieutenant and occasionally interacting with the Business Services Manager. Considering the demands placed on Leadership's time, this is a good practice.

When asked, staff prefer e-mails and team meetings as the preferred forms of communication. All kinds of communication would be appreciated. The scores for this section showed a slight decrease; however, communication remains an essential issue for the Unit.

Communication / Interaction	2019	2020	Score Δ (change)	% Δ (change)
Scores	18.57	18.42	-0.15	-1%

Decision making

As the pace of change increases, the ability of leaders to make high-quality decisions quickly and accurately is a critical leadership capability. Bad decisions can put organizations in jeopardy for obvious reasons, but delayed decisions can also hurt by losing competitive advantage.¹⁸

We are coming to recognize with increasing clarity that the capacity of an organization to function well depends both upon the quality of its decision-making processes and upon the adequacy and accuracy of the information used.¹⁹

We designed the decision-making questions to ascertain staff perceptions about how and where the Leadership Team makes decisions and the impact on department operations.

Staff perceives that in their Unit, decisions are made at the top with limited autonomy for them to make other decisions. Staff observes that leadership occasionally consults with them regarding decisions related to their work.

Staff is often the best individuals to be involved in decision-making since they are most often in direct contact with those they serve or with specific issues. While it is not necessary to engage staff in making all decisions, leadership can improve performance by involving them in as many decisions as possible, especially where their expertise or experience can add value. The most effective models range from soliciting staff input and then informing them of management's reasoning for a decision to management facilitating staff in a consensus decision-making approach. In the latter model, management uses its expertise and experience to ensure the decision made is workable.

Ethical leadership behaviors help to increase trust among peers. Ethical leaders demonstrate moral and fair behaviors and decision-making. This ties back to communication — leaders must communicate ethical standards to employees and include why certain decisions are made.

¹⁸ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2017/10/05/your-indecision-is-costing-too-much-8-proven-behaviors-to-become-more-decisive/#3f93d5b53755>

¹⁹ Likert, page 128.

And they have to be held to those standards themselves and hold other employees to those standards as well. Maintaining these moral standards is crucial to instilling trust in employees.²⁰

When asked in what areas staff want to make more decisions, the standard answer was the ability to make day to day decisions, allowing them to decide where to focus. Staff would like more autonomy to help APD officers and detectives, if they remain within policy. As noted above, the staff wants the Leadership Team's trust. Increasing trust may lead to the Leadership Team providing staff more autonomy in decision making.

Decision-Making	2019	2020	Score Δ (change)	% Δ (change)
Scores	7.99	6.67	-1.32	-17%

Goal setting and control

Individuals are unlikely to set high performance goals for themselves and organize their work well if their supervisors and managers do not have such aspirations for each individual and for the entire department.²¹

Overall, P&E staff perceive that the Leadership Team establishes the goals with little opportunity for them to provide input. Additionally, 33% of staff stated that they did not know what their area goals were or believed they did not have any.

Goal Setting	2019	2020	Score Δ (change)	% Δ (change)
Scores	6.52	4.84	-1.67	-26%

Staff perceives work is mostly controlled and reviewed by the Leadership Team without any delegation to staff. Staff regards that performance data is used for policing and punishment and rarely used for guidance.

Control	2019	2020	Score Δ (change)	% Δ (change)
Scores	3.27	2.45	-0.82	-25%

Goal setting and control is undoubtedly an area where the Leadership Team can improve by making staff aware of Unit goals and including staff in establishing future Unit goals.

Goals staff would like to add to the current goals include:

²⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2019/09/04/four-ways-to-build-trust-between-your-organization-and-employees/#44e45c445ea1>

²¹ Likert, page 63.

- All P&E staff working at one facility
- Streamlining the disposal process
- Streamlining the property runs to the various pick-up locations
- Increasing communication among the Unit.

Hearing the staff's suggestions and providing staff with a rationale for specific decisions will move the Unit toward a more participative management system.

Teamwork

Team building is key to the success of your employees. When there is tension or rifts between the members of your department, it can slow down processes, severely hamper creativity and decrease overall employee satisfaction—things that you definitely want to avoid.²²

The capacity to achieve cooperative teamwork improves an organization's productive capability.²³

This section is new for the 2020 survey.

P&E staff report that they try to work as a team, but personalities get in the way. The staff holds a general perception that their teammates often commit to quality work. They also state their teammates' contributions are somewhat of high quality. Despite working with different personalities, which is a common workplace issue, these are positive observations.

P&E staff perceives that there is quite a bit of cooperative teamwork within the Unit, but there could be more. The staff shares the same sentiment regarding cooperative teamwork between the Unit and other departments.

Team building within the Unit may foster more teamwork. It may address the issue of working as a team, even with different personalities. However, team building is not a one-time effort. It requires regular, consistent attention.

Other ideas include organizing cross-functional mentorship programs whereby staff are able to work with a department head from a different functional group to gain more awareness of their broader team's objectives, and also have the ability to learn from someone that is not their direct supervisor. This fosters more open communication.²⁴

²² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/06/13/six-effective-ways-to-improve-team-morale-and-bonding/#288dfbe65598>

²³ Likert, page 148.

²⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/06/13/six-effective-ways-to-improve-team-morale-and-bonding/#288dfbe65598>

Core 4 and other matters

The employee's perception of the situation, rather than the manager's, determines whether or not an experience is supportive.²⁵

The more often a supervisor's or manager's behavior is supportive rather than deflating, the better will be the effect of their behavior on organizational performance.²⁶

Staff believe the CORE 4 values are important. The Unit shows high scores in this section. Leadership is encouraging staff and providing opportunities to grow. These are activities that demonstrate support for employees and their professional goals. Seventy-five percent of staff believe there is someone at work that encourages them. When asked if someone has talked to them about their progress in the last six months, 91% of staff responded, "Yes."

"...employees who don't feel supported in their professional goals are three times more likely to be looking for a new job, according to the research."²⁷

When asked in the last year, if they have had opportunities to grow and learn, 100% of staff responded, "Yes."

²⁵ Likert, page 48.

²⁶ Likert, page 47.

²⁷ <https://www.inc.com/marcel-schwantes/why-do-people-quit-their-jobs-exactly-new-research-points-finger-at-5-common-reasons.html>

Internal Audit Recommendations

Communication

When asked what areas the Leadership Team can improve, the overwhelming response was in communication. As Likert suggested, communication should flow up, down, and sideways throughout the organization. Effective communication can lead to a Unit focus on goals, increased focus on projects, and improved morale.

We recommend the Leadership Team determine methods for communicating Unit and department information to staff. We recommend the Leadership Team present a united front when conveying information to staff to ensure that all staff receives the same communication, regardless of job assignment.

*Recommended implementation date: **IMPLEMENTED***

Recognition Efforts

When asked if they had been recognized or praised for good work during the last seven days, 50% of staff responded, "Yes," and 50% of staff responded, "No." Staff shared that recognition is a motivating factor for them.

The best managers promote a recognition-rich environment, with praise coming from every direction and everyone aware of how others like to receive appreciation. This type of employee feedback should be frequent -- Gallup recommends every seven days -- and timely to ensure that the employee knows the significance of the recent achievement and to reinforce company values.²⁸

We recommend that the Leadership Team develop activities to both formally and informally recognize staff performance. As noted in the report, recognition not only increases the morale of that individual, but it also serves as an illustration of the desired behavior expected of other staff. The top performers need to know their performance is appreciated. These employees are likely to be more engaged and loyal to the organization.

*Recommended implementation date: **IMPLEMENTED***

Increasing Staff Involvement

Property and Evidence staff perceives that in their Unit, decisions are made at the top with limited autonomy for them to make other decisions. The Leadership Team only sometimes seeks their ideas. Leadership establishes goals and does not delegate control functions to staff.

We recommend the Leadership Team develop ways to increase two-way feedback and staff participation in decision-making, goal-setting, and problem solving. We recommend the Leadership Team ensure there is clear communication regarding the decision-making and goal setting processes and the reasons for making individual decisions and goals.

*Recommended implementation date: **IMPLEMENTED***

²⁸ <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236441/employee-recognition-low-cost-high-impact.aspx?version=print>

Meyers Briggs/Discovery Insights

P&E staff report that they try to work as a team, but personalities get in the way.

Leaders should value one of its organization's best assets: its people. If a continuous investment is not made in training or people development...[t]he organization will become stale and have difficulty succeeding in a changing environment.²⁹

We recommend training or an activity specifically around cooperative teamwork while communicating with different personalities in the workplace. Two resources to consider are the Meyers Briggs or Discovery Insights programs.

Recommended implementation date: December 30, 2020

Overall Mission

The Property and Evidence Unit plays a significant role in ensuring the continuity of custody and the protection of property and evidence. There was a 50/50 response rate by staff that the City's mission makes them feel their job is important. Staff can benefit from more understanding of the mission as City of Aurora staff, as Aurora Police Department staff, and individually as Property and Evidence Unit staff. Understanding this alignment and mission may increase staff feelings of importance in their roles.

We recommend the Leadership Team take time at the designated staff meetings to remind staff of the purpose and mission of the Unit and how it relates to the overall City mission.

*Recommended implementation date: **IMPLEMENTED***

Management Response: The leadership team has implemented two liaison teams to bolster communication and input from the staff of the unit. The Unit Representative Team consists of a representative from each location and the two supervisors. The goal is to foster open communication, bring concerns, bolster teamwork and provide better communication between staff and the leadership team. This team meets once a month.

The Policy and Goals Team will review and make suggestions to policy, unit SOP's and to support department goals through development of unit goals. This team will meet once a month. This team will consist of a representative from each location and the supervisors with the Lieutenant of the unit meeting with the team as needed.

These teams are designed to uplift morale while providing the technicians a process to have input into the decisions while improving efficiencies of the unit. This will complement the communication that is currently happening in the unit which consists of weekly and monthly newsletters in addition to the daily interaction between the leadership team and the technicians. Additionally, the property staff received the most awards during the annual police awards presentation last year. This is due to the recognition by the property supervisors of the great work their teams do throughout the year.

²⁹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/10/18/14-signs-of-negative-leadership-and-how-you-can-fix-it/#798ee35cd982>

Appendix C – Survey Scores and Auditor Conclusions

Internal Audit considers scores below 2.5 to indicate areas requiring further attention. The closer a department can get to the top of the scale, the better.

Section	Question	2019 Weighted Average	2020 Weighted Average	Top of Scale	Conclusion
Leadership	How much confidence is shown in you by those who oversee your work?	3.06	3.00	4	Staff perceives that the Leadership Team shows substantial but not complete confidence in them.
	How comfortable do you feel talking to those who oversee your work about issues related to your job?	3.31	3.00	4	Staff feels comfortable talking to the Leadership Team about matters related to their job.
	How often are your ideas and opinions sought and used constructively by those above you?	2.75	2.42	4	Staff perception is that Leadership sometimes seeks their ideas and tries to use them constructively.
Motivation	What are the predominant methods used to motivate you in your job?	2.80	2.67	4	Staff perception is that occasional rewards and some threats or punishment are the predominant methods used for motivation on the job. Staff also perceive greater involvement in decision making as a motivation method.
	Where do you believe the responsibility should be for achieving your departments goals?	4.46	3.27	5	Staff perceives that the Leadership Team mostly should have responsibility for achieving goals. Still, the staff should have a substantial portion of responsibility.

Communication / Interaction

How much cooperative teamwork occurs within your division?	3.60	3.50	4 Staff perception is that there is quite a bit of cooperative teamwork happening within the division, but there could be more.
How much cooperative teamwork occurs between your area and other departments?	2.93	3.00	4 Staff perception is that there is quite a bit of cooperative teamwork occurring between the Unit and other departments, but there could be more.
What is the usual direction of information flow?	2.81	2.75	4 Staff perception is that information flows mostly from the top-down, with some bottom-up information flow.
How do you view communications from those above you in the organization hierarchy?	3.00	3.08	4 Staff perception is that communications from the Leadership Team are often accepted, but at times viewed with suspicion, may or may not be openly questioned.
How accurate is what you communicate to those above you in the organization?	3.37	3.42	4 Staff perception is that they provide accurate information but sometimes will hold back.
How well do those above you know the problems you face in your job?	2.86	2.67	4 Staff perception is that the Leadership Team has a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of their problems.
How would you characterize the interactions between management and staff?	<i>New Question</i>	2.83	4 Staff perception leans toward moderate genuine interaction and some mutual trust.

Decision Making	How is your ability to communicate and interact with your responsible Deputy or Assistant City Manager?	<i>New Question</i>	3.17	4	Staff perception is that the P&E Lieutenant often interacts with the Unit.
	How is your ability to communicate and interact with the Business Services Manager?	<i>New Question</i>	1.83	4	Staff perception is that the Business Service Manager occasionally interacts with the Unit.
	At what level are decisions made in your division?	1.93	2.17	4	Staff perception is that decisions are made at the top with little autonomous staff decisions.
	Are you involved in decisions related to your work?	3.06	2.42	4	Staff perception is that leadership are occasionally consults them about decisions related to their work.
	Does the decision-making process used in your department/division contribute to your motivation?	3.00	2.08	4	Staff perception is that the decision-making process has relatively little contribution to their motivation.
	To what extent are decision-makers aware of problems, particularly those at the staff level?	<i>New Question</i>	2.33	4	Staff perception is that decision-makers are aware of some but unaware of other problems that staff face.
Setting Goal	How are your area goals established?	2.83	1.63	4	Staff perception is that the Leadership Team establishes goals. Some staff did not know what the goals are or that the Unit has goals.

	How are goals received and treated?	3.69	3.22	5	Staff perception is that they publicly accept the goals but only work to achieve those with which they agree.
Control	Where is work controlled and reviewed in your department?	1.13	1.5	3	Staff perception is that work is controlled and reviewed at the Leadership Team level.
	What is performance data used for in your area?	3.27	2.45	4	Staff perception is that performance data is used for policing and punishing and is rarely used for guidance.
Team Work	How would you describe "teamwork" with your teammates (same department/division?)	<i>New Question</i>	3.58	5	Staff perception is that they try to work as a team, but personalities get in the way. Training on skills to work as a team may help.
	Are your teammates committed to doing quality work?	<i>New Question</i>	3.58	5	Staff perception is that their teammates are often committed to doing quality work.
	How would you describe the quality of your teammates' contributions to your department's work?	<i>New Question</i>	6	8	Staff perception is that their teammates' contributions are of somewhat high quality.
Core 4 and Other Matters	How important to you are the Core 4 values?	3.60	3.33	4	The Core 4 values are important to staff.
	Do you know what is expected of you at work?	<i>New Question</i>	Yes: 100% No: 0.0%		There is no confusion about job responsibilities.
	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	<i>New Question</i>	3.17	4	Staff perception is that they often have the opportunity to do what they do best every day.

In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

New Question Yes: 50%
No: 50%

The result is 50/50. Recognition efforts require the Leadership Team's attention.

Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

New Question Yes: 75%
No: 25%

The majority of staff have someone at work who encourages their development. The Leadership Team can focus on ensuring all staff are encouraged because 25% of staff responded 'No.'

Does the mission/purpose of the City make you feel your job is important?

New Question Yes: 50%
No: 50%

The result is 50/50. This area requires management's attention.

In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?

New Question Yes: 91.7%
No: 8.3%

91% of the staff has had someone talk to them about their progress.

In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

New Question Yes: 100%
No: 0%

100% of staff responded that they have had opportunities to learn and grow.