

**Nassau County
Office of the Comptroller
Field Audit Bureau**



**Nassau County Police Department
Operational Review of
Communications Bureau**

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NASSAU COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Police Department Communications Bureau's ("Bureau") primary mission is to serve as the central communications base for all police emergencies, notably through its 911 emergency dispatch operation. The Bureau also coordinates radio and telephone operations for the department, as well as the issuance of permits and the imposition of fines related to burglar alarms in non-permitted locations.

As of March 31, 2003, the Bureau was comprised of 217 employees: 18 sworn and 199 civilian. There are eight administrative sections, in addition to the 911 Operations Area, performing work ancillary to the emergency operations function of the Bureau. As a result of early retirement incentives, as well as the assignment of emergency operations personnel to administrative work, the Bureau's primary challenge is in the recruitment and retention of qualified Police Communications Operators ("PCOs").

Bureau expenditures were \$19.2 million in 2002 compared with \$18.7 million in 2001, and \$16.7 million in 2000. A major factor in the increased expenditures is the growth in "short roll-call overtime," i.e., overtime due to absences, earned by the Bureau's civilian employees. The Bureau's total overtime increased from \$964,000 in 2000, to \$1.7 million in 2001 and \$1.8 million in 2002.

Audit Scope, Objective and Methodology

The objective of the audit was to ascertain whether police resources are being effectively utilized. We reviewed the Bureau's functions, with particular attention to the duties performed by civilian emergency operations personnel, as well as the sworn members. We examined the nature of, and need for, overtime. We interviewed the Bureau's staff extensively to understand where cost savings might be realized through more effective use of technology, by eliminating duplication of effort, and through other means.

This audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. These standards require that the audit be planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance that the audited information is free of material misstatements. An audit includes examining documents and other available evidence that would substantiate the accuracy of the information tested, including all relevant records and contracts. It includes testing for compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and any other auditing procedures necessary to complete the examination. We believe that the audit provides a reasonable basis for the audit findings and recommendations.

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Summary of Significant Audit Findings

Our examination of the Bureau identified \$2,857,170 in potential annual cost savings, including the following:

- In addition to their emergency operations duties, PCOs and their supervisors (Police Communication Operator Supervisors or “PCOS”) perform all administrative tasks in the command. Significant cost savings could be realized if these employees were assigned only to tasks commensurate with their job titles and if additional civilians in appropriate clerical titles were hired to perform administrative and staff work. Specifically, we recommend redeploying 15 civilian employees, including 3 supervisors, back to 911 floor operations and replacing them with titles more appropriate to administrative responsibilities. We anticipate that this initiative could realize salary savings of \$213,879, exclusive of overtime.
- There are seven sworn members performing functions more appropriately performed by civilian employees possessing the requisite educational and technical background. We estimate that this initiative could realize savings of \$355,166, exclusive of overtime.
- The department has been working to install an automated alarm attendant software system, which would eliminate the need for a 911 operator to answer the majority of burglar alarm calls. The installation, however, has been delayed due to lack of support from the Computer Aided Dispatch system (“CAD”) vendor in providing emulator software to link the CAD system with the automated alarm attendant software system. Top priority should be given to the implementation of the automated alarm attendant, which will permit the Bureau to reduce its minimum staffing for 911 operations by one to two positions per shift. We project that this initiative could realize an annual savings of \$256,938, exclusive of overtime.
- There are 101 civilian personnel in the Bureau receiving shift differential for working day tours, in apparent contravention of the Civil Service Employees Association (“CSEA”) contract, as well as a Memorandum of Agreement on shift differential. We estimate that this overpayment is costing the county approximately \$481,187 annually.
- The Bureau is chronically understaffed, based on its own staffing guidelines for 911 floor operations. Eight to ten positions require overtime on every tour of duty.
- The Bureau’s workweek is 4.25 hours less than that of Suffolk’s police communications bureau, which handles a similar workload. Factoring in meals, breaks and make-up days, the workweek is only 28.25 hours. The Bureau’s relatively lower productivity in terms of work-hours per week costs the county approximately \$1.2

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million per year.

- The Bureau's statistics show that 99.4 percent of the calls dispatched by automatic burglar alarms are false. These calls represent nearly 30 percent of all calls dispatched by the Bureau. We estimate that false alarm responses by the department cost a minimum of \$7 million annually. The Bureau has been developing Alarm Abuser Legislation for submittal to the County Legislature. We urge the Police to submit this legislation at the earliest opportunity. Localities that have strong alarm abuser legislation have reduced their costs by at least five percent per year. If enacted in the county, such legislation could result in annual savings of at least \$350,000 per year and enable the department to deploy its police resources more effectively in other areas, such as crime prevention and community policing initiatives.

Other significant issues regarding personnel costs that should be reviewed by the department include:

- a pattern of abuse and manipulation of leave entitlements that enables staff to work overtime, yet utilize leave time on the same day. A review of the time and leave records for two employees that the Bureau had designated as 'sick leave abusers' disclosed that one was, in fact, the Bureau's top overtime earner, earning, with overtime, \$125,285 in 2002.
- operational inefficiencies resulting from personnel working 12-hour tours-of-duty. These include:
 - the granting of four half-hour breaks due to the stressfulness of the job, which has resulted in employees working only nine hours during a 12-hour tour;
 - difficulty in hiring, since potential new employees have been deterred from accepting the position due to the prospect of having to work tours consisting solely of weekend nights; and
 - limited personnel flexibility, since these tours are fixed over three days.

In addition to identifying cost savings from redeployment of civilians and the civilianization of positions held by sworn personnel, we performed a limited operational review of the Bureau and the technology required to manage the 911 operations. Our findings in this area are as follows:

- The department's radio system is over 20 years old, with obsolete equipment and numerous dead spots for transmission, putting both police officers and the public at risk. In addition, the department's radio equipment is not inter-operable with that of other

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county, local, state and federal agencies, impeding the department's ability to coordinate operations with the 24 separate law enforcement jurisdictions operating within the county and other nearby counties. (We note that a significant issue in the September 11, 2001 rescue efforts was difficulty with radio communications due to the use of incompatible equipment by the various agencies responding to the disaster.)

The department is planning to issue a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the purchase of a new radio system. To assure that this purchase meets the department's needs, we recommend that:

- the department work with the county's Office of Grants Management to ensure that the replacement system is eligible for federal funding.
- the replacement system include the latest available technology, including Automatic Vehicle Locator ("AVL"), to assist in deploying resources. This is particularly important in the first hours of a large-scale emergency. Currently the department does not use AVL to assist in the deployment of emergency personnel. As a result, emergency dispatchers cannot quickly locate the nearest available vehicle, but must rely on officers in the field to call in their location as they respond to the emergency. AVL technology offers the added benefit of serving as a navigational tool, incorporating time-critical data to allow for the best and safest response route to the scene. The Suffolk County Police Communications Bureau has fully integrated AVL technology into its patrol vehicles.
- The computer-aided dispatch system (CAD) is the central system for enhanced 911 operations. It is supposed to receive calls, classify incidents and dispatch patrol officers in the most effective manner possible, yet certain factors hamper its effectiveness. For example,
 - In approximately 35 percent of incoming calls, the automatic number and location indicators fail, requiring the operators to manually input the information, thus delaying the department's ability to respond to the situation. It is important to reduce this failure rate, in order to speed response times.
 - The system is unable to generate useful and timely reports of activity for management analysis.
- The 911 system continues to suffer from too many non-emergency calls. Some of these calls can be handled at the precinct level. We recommend that the department undertake a public service campaign to clarify when the public should call 911 and how to deal with

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other, non-emergency problems that require notifying the police.

This report makes additional recommendations for the establishment of an alternative 911 facility, the establishment of an Operations Practices Board, as recommended by New York State, as well as the establishment of a “311” Center in Nassau County to coordinate non-police service requests.

Police Department Response

The matters covered in this report have been discussed with officials from the department during, and at the conclusion of this audit. On December 3, 2003, we submitted a draft report to department officials with a request for comments. We received a written response from the department on December 19, 2003. The full text of the department’s responses and our comments to their responses are included as an addendum to this report.

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Personnel Issues

Background

The Bureau is chronically understaffed, based on its own staffing guidelines for 911 floor operations (last updated in April 2000). Eight to ten positions require overtime on every tour of duty. The department's records indicate that the Bureau averaged 4,794 hours of overtime per month in 2002, an increase of 50 percent above the 2000 level.

The civilian staff in the Bureau consists mainly of civilian Police Communications Operators ("PCOs") and Police Communications Operator Supervisors ("PCOS"). The Commanding Officer informed us that the Bureau has been severely limited in its ability to hire new PCOs. This problem has been the result of several factors, including: a lack of qualified applicants on the civil service lists; failure of applicants to pass the department's applicant investigation process; and the requirement that new employees work the least desirable tours, such as weekend nights.

As of March 31, 2003, the Bureau had 217 employees: 18 sworn officers and 199 civilians. In addition, three civilian employees were on extended sick leave, and two were on a 60 percent reduced schedule. Of the 199 Civilians, 153 PCOs and 12 PCOS were assigned to the 911-floor operations; and 16 PCOs and 5 PCOS were assigned to administrative staff positions. The remaining 13 civilian positions consisted of 10 police case offense transcribers, one part-time PCO, one multi-keyboard operator I, and one clerk. Although 15 new PCOs were hired effective December 6, 2002, the Bureau still remains eight positions short as compared with staffing on January 1, 2002, due to attrition and the 2002 retirement incentive. Administrative personnel are periodically re-assigned to 911 duties when staff shortages are acute. However, this option is only available Monday to Friday. An additional problem is created when the Bureau falls behind in its administrative work.

Ten of the sworn members assigned to the Bureau work in various administrative capacities. The remaining eight are sergeants working as tour supervisors in the 911 operations area. We will address potential civilianization issues in our findings regarding each area of the Bureau.

Twelve-Hour Tours-of-Duty

Audit Finding (1):

In 1994, the Bureau's squads began working fixed 12-hour tours-of-duty as part of a negotiated pilot program with the CSEA. This pilot program, which has remained in place for the past nine years, has resulted in the following operational inefficiencies:

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- The 12-hour tours tend to exacerbate the stressfulness of the job. To help them cope with job stresses, employees are granted four half-hour breaks in addition to a one-hour meal break. This results in the employees actually working only nine hours during a 12-hour tour. The frequency and length of the breaks results in the need for more employees to cover the additional break hours.
- Squad picks are by seniority. Therefore, the most senior employees have the most desirable tours. This has made hiring more difficult, since potential new hires have been deterred from accepting the position in some cases due to the prospect of having to work tours consisting solely of weekend nights.
- These tours are fixed over three consecutive days per week (a 12-hour make-up tour occurs every 7 weeks), thereby greatly limiting personnel flexibility within the Bureau.

Recommendation:

a. More flexible work tours as well as expanded recruitment could assist in attracting qualified personnel.

b. The department should consider discontinuing the 12-hour shifts, which were originally intended to be a pilot program nine years ago, and substitute a tour schedule that better reflects the Bureau's needs. For example, modifying the tour to lessen the weekend burden on new employees would help alleviate the department's problems hiring qualified personnel. In a tour of Suffolk County's Communications Bureau, we found that they use a voluntary fixed 0000-0800 shift, with the remaining shifts alternating between 0800-1600 and 1600-0000.

c. If the department decides to continue with the 12-hour tours, we recommend that the department:

- work with the Civil Service Commission on expanding recruitment for these positions, perhaps to college campuses, where students might have an interest in a full-time weekends only position; and
- modify the work schedule to allow for rotating weekends off.

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Chronic Understaffing

Audit Finding (2):

As noted above, the Bureau is chronically understaffed. Records indicate that it averaged 4,794 hours of overtime per month in 2002, an increase of 50 percent above overtime earned in 2000. The Commanding Officer informed audit staff that there are not enough personnel to cover the required overtime. A Bureau analysis of a four-week period in July 2002 showed that 43 percent of available overtime hours could not be filled.

Our review of total overtime hours worked confirmed the Bureau's increasing reliance on overtime to meet minimum staffing requirements:

- In 2002, an average of six positions per tour were filled via short roll-call overtime, over the entire year, up from an average of two positions per tour in 2000;
- There were three times as many instances of short roll-call overtime in 2002 as compared to 2000. 2002 overtime summaries showed 21 daily instances of short roll-call overtime for each day of the year, or 10.5 per tour, averaging 6.5 hours each, as compared with seven daily instances, averaging 6.75 hours each, in 2000.
- After rising 61 percent from 2000 to 2001, total overtime hours in the bureau decreased slightly from 2001 to 2002. Short roll-call overtime, however, increased from 74 percent to 88 percent as a percentage of total overtime in that period.

In 2002, there were 35 employees who worked the equivalent of two full shifts of overtime or more per pay period. The cost for the 24,727 overtime hours worked by these employees was \$851,378, or 47 percent of the Bureau's total overtime cost of \$1.8 million. At time-and-a-half, plus shift differential and holiday premium pay, the related cost of these hours is equivalent to approximately 83 percent of the employees' total base earnings. An additional 2,457 hours, or 10 percent, which was accrued in compensatory time, is not reflected in current costs, but is deferred to a future date at a higher rate. Three of these employees earned over \$100,000 in 2002, while the remaining employees earned an average of \$77,091, on an average base salary of \$42,056.

These high earnings indicate the need to hire additional personnel rather than using overtime to meet minimum staffing requirements.

The Bureau's overtime reports do not necessarily reflect the number of staff positions *requiring* overtime coverage. For example, while an analysis of the four-week period from June 30-July

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27, 2002 disclosed that six to seven positions were filled via overtime, an additional four positions on each tour remained vacant. On 10 days during this period, 21 tours had five or more vacant positions. These vacancies, combined with the increases in overtime, result in a constant feeling of crisis in the Bureau and put the department, as well as the public, at risk by diminishing the ability to respond in an emergency. The Bureau has stated that lower staff levels directly relate to increases in call wait-time.

A visit to the Suffolk's police communications bureau yielded an interesting comparison. While both counties have similar levels of incoming calls and call wait times, Suffolk's 2001 overtime costs were approximately *one-third* of Nassau's. In addition, although the Nassau bureau has difficulties recruiting and retaining employees, Suffolk's does not report any significant difficulties in recruitment and retention of employees. Suffolk employees work a schedule that rotates as follows: 5-days-on (early shift), 2-days-off; followed by 5-days-on (late shift), 3 days off. There is a voluntary fixed 0000-0800 shift. The remaining shifts alternate between 0800-1600 and 1600-0000. With lunch and breaks, the workweek is 32.5 hours.

By comparison, Nassau's Communications Bureau uses a 3-day fixed 12-hour shift with no deviation in days off and an additional 12-hour make-up day seven times a year. Factoring in meals, breaks and make-up days, the workweek is only 28.25 hours, or *4.25 hours less* than Suffolk's Bureau. The Bureau's reduced weekly hours worked cost the county approximately \$1.2 million per year.

Recommendation:

a. We recommend that the department adopt some of Suffolk's practices and take the following steps:

- revisit current staffing guidelines with the aim of instituting a more flexible work tour structure;
- consider the opportunities such changes in work schedules might create for increasing the number of employee work-hours actually devoted to work;
- offer flexibility in the granting of compensatory time off, which could assist in planning for staff shortages; and
- use appropriate clerical titles for work ancillary to actual 911 operations, i.e. administrative functions, instead of using PCOs for these tasks.

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b. We also recommend that the department:

- examine the feasibility of hiring additional employees to minimize overtime hours;
- post recruitment notices on its Web site;
- work with the Administration to expedite the issuance of the civil service list for the PCO exam given in September 2002; and
- review whether the department's ability to respond to a major emergency situation is being compromised by insufficient staffing.

Recommendations to alleviate the volume of calls being handled by the Bureau are discussed later in this report.

Overpayment of Shift Differential

Audit Finding (3):

Section 26 of the current CSEA contract states, "A County employee, at least one-half of whose shift is between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. shall receive additional shift differential for each hour actually worked, regardless of whether such hours are between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m." Our audit found that all Chart 12B civilian personnel in the Bureau receive shift differential payments for their entire tour, without regard to whether one-half of their shift is between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. (Chart 12B is a 12-hour chart for civilian members of the department. Employees working under this chart work exclusively either days or nights and fixed days of the week. Every seventh week there is a 12-hour make-up day.) The Bureau furnished us with a Stipulation of Settlement entered into between the County and the CSEA in 1997, which required the county to pay shift differential at a specific baseline representing the number of hours worked each pay period. However, this stipulation only addressed the baseline, it does not indicate that day-tour civilian personnel should be paid shift differential. Shift differential should accrue to any employee who works hours as described in Section 26 of the CSEA contract. Currently there are 101 civilian employees at the Bureau working the Chart 12B day tour who receive shift differential. The cost to the county is approximately \$4,764 per employee, exclusive of overtime, for an annualized cost of \$481,187.

Recommendation:

We were unable to obtain any documentation that would supersede the CSEA contract and authorize payment of shift differential to the Chart 12B day-tour civilian personnel. We therefore recommend that the department cease payments of shift differential to Chart 12B day-

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four employees in the Bureau.

Re-Deployment of Police Communication Operators Performing Administrative Duties

Audit Finding (4):

As of March 31, 2003, there were 16 PCOs and 5 PCOS assigned to administrative duty not directly related to the 911 operations, performing tasks including time and leave, equipment inventory, and fiscal tasks. These jobs are considered premium assignments and therefore go to skilled, senior personnel. We note that by using these 21 employees for administrative assignments, the Bureau is foregoing utilizing their work hours, which total approximately 2,657 hours per month, to alleviate the necessity for overtime. There are occasions, however, when the roll-call shortage is so acute that these employees are asked to work on the “floor” during their regular workday. This in turn creates a backup of the regular administrative work in the Bureau.

Recommendation:

Police Communication Operators and Supervisors are trained to work in emergency operations. We recommend that they apply their skills to the primary task of the bureau, rather than for administrative duties. In addition, returning these employees to their specific job duties would result in a significant reduction in overtime in the Bureau. We make specific recommendations for the use of more appropriate administrative titles in our analysis of the ancillary units of the Bureau.

Telephone Office

Background

The Telephone Office coordinates and maintains the telecommunications system for the entire police department, including pagers, cellular phones, 911 recording system, 911 database, and enhanced 911 system. (Enhanced 911 includes the ability to capture automatically Verizon’s number and geographical location information.) The office works with Verizon to identify and service the department’s needs, in particular the 911 specialized trunk lines within Verizon’s Nassau County network, as well as Verizon’s name and address database. In addition, office staff maintain inventories of all telecommunications equipment and review all related bills for the department.

The personnel currently assigned to the Telephone Office are as follows:

- 1 Lieutenant
- 1 Police Officer

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3 Police Communications Operators
1 Multi-Keyboard Operator I

Communications Function

Alternative Emergency Facility

Audit Finding (5):

There is no alternative emergency facility equipped to handle enhanced 911 operations. The only emergency site currently available to handle 911 calls is a phone bank located in a second floor conference room of Police Headquarters. The ability to capture automatically Verizon's number and geographical location information would not be available at this site. Thus police response in this location would be delayed by the need for operators to manually input address and phone information. The 911 Emergency Operations Center is currently located in an underground facility behind Police Headquarters. The events of September 11, 2001 clearly demonstrate the need for a secure off-site alternate facility incorporating the essential features of enhanced 911 operations.

Recommendation:

The department should immediately implement a plan to locate a fully functional enhanced alternate 911 Center off-site from Police Headquarters. We are aware that the department is working on a new Public Safety Center that will have a more secure 911 facility; however, given current national security concerns, prudence would dictate that a secondary *enhanced* 911 site be established.

The department worked with Verizon to develop a portable enhanced 911 center at Nassau Community College for the 1998 Goodwill Games. There are several locations, such as the Bellmore facility or the Aviation facility in Bethpage that could house an alternate emergency enhanced 911 center on a short-term basis until a more appropriate location is determined.

Civilianization

Audit Finding (6):

Currently, a police lieutenant supervises the department's Telecommunications Office. The lieutenant's duties do not involve any law enforcement functions, and are limited to managing the telephone office and performing telephone installations for the department.

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Recommendation:

The maintenance of an organization's telephone technology, especially one as diverse as the Police Department's, is becoming increasingly complex and requires a fundamentally different set of skills from those of a police lieutenant. We believe that a manager with the requisite education and experience in this area could more effectively perform these duties. Moreover, a telecommunications professional with the required background can be compensated for significantly less than a lieutenant. We recommend replacing the lieutenant's position with a Communications Equipment Manager and allowing the lieutenant to be more effectively deployed elsewhere in the department. Based on the average lieutenant's earnings, *excluding overtime*, and that of an Communications Equipment Manager, we estimate the annual savings at approximately \$47,000.

Audit Finding (7):

The duties of the police officer assigned to this office appear to be limited to assisting the lieutenant in the performance of his duties and do not involve any law enforcement functions. We believe that a civilian employee with the necessary education and technical experience for the position could reasonably perform these duties.

Recommendation:

We recommend replacing the police officer position with a title more appropriate to the duties of maintaining and updating telecommunications networks. Suffolk County has a position of Telecommunications Analyst, with a description that appears to be appropriate for this position. We recommend that the department request the Nassau County Civil Service Commission to create a title equivalent to the title used by Suffolk County. We would expect this position to be comparable with Nassau County's grade 13, at a salary of \$51,513, resulting in annual savings of approximately \$40,129, exclusive of overtime.

Re-Deployment of Police Communications Operators

Audit Finding (8):

One of the Police Communications Operators assigned to the office performs primarily clerical duties. Two of the PCOs maintain and update the Verizon ANI/ALI databases used in enhanced 911 operations. While technical knowledge of the 911 system is useful in order to effectively perform this function, we do not agree that it is essential that PCOs perform this work. Suffolk County utilizes a position of Telecommunications Aide that incorporates many of these duties and which would enable these employees to return to 911 operations. This change will also help

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alleviate the staff shortage and reduce overtime costs.

Recommendation:

We recommend replacing the three PCOs with three Telecommunications Aides, at grade 8 position, once a title is created in Nassau County. This will result in annual savings of approximately \$39,000, exclusive of overtime and shift differential. Additional savings would be achieved by reducing the number of overtime hours.

CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) Office

Background:

The Computer-Aided Dispatch system (CAD) is the central system for enhanced 911 operations. It receives calls, classifies incidents and dispatches patrol officers. The CAD Office provides support for the hardware and software applications of the CAD system. The CAD system is also supposed to generate various reports, which the department can utilize to sort information in various ways, such as certain types of calls, calls by post, and repeat calls from a specific location.

The department purchased the CAD system from Public Safety Systems, Inc., expending \$2.4 million as of March 1999. The vendor stopped supporting the system in 1999 as the result of a dispute with the county concerning Y2K compliance. Therefore, for the past four years, it has been the responsibility of the CAD staff to provide all support for the system. The department is evaluating its options regarding replacement of the system.

Personnel currently assigned to the CAD Office are as follows:

- 1 Police Communications Operator Supervisor
- 2 Police Communications Operators

Functionality and Effectiveness of CAD System

Audit Finding (9):

Through various interviews with Bureau personnel we learned the following:

- The Automatic Number Indicators (“ANI”) and Automatic Location Indicators (“ALI”) fail to automatically appear in approximately 35 percent of incoming wireline calls. This requires the operators to input the information manually, delaying the department’s response time.

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- The system does not comply with FCC Phase I and II guidelines for enhanced cellular calls. The current system's difficulty in replicating the ANI and ALI data for landlines does not bode well for the identification of cellular calls.
- The inability of the system to generate useful and timely reports of activity for management analysis, i.e. incidents by post, or time spent per dispatched call, limits the department's ability to analyze how it uses its resources.

Recommendation:

a. CAD is essential to the effectiveness of the Bureau. The department has indicated it is moving to acquire a new CAD. It is imperative that a new CAD system address the high failure rate of automatic number and location indicators, in order to speed response times. To assure that the new system meets the department's needs, we recommend that the department carefully analyze and consider incorporating the latest fail-safe technologies, including, but not limited to, GPS/GIS technology, as well as the ability to integrate with AVL ('Automatic Vehicle Locator') technology, which would better direct the emergency response team. The new CAD system must interface with the radio system, as well as provide a seamless transition to the Records Management System.

b. We also recommend that the county review the purchase of recent CAD systems in other municipalities to understand the types of problems they encountered and the benefits they achieved with these systems.

Adequacy of Call Wait Statistics

Audit Finding (10):

The Bureau maintains statistics only on call wait times for incoming calls to the E-911 system. The desired time frame to answer a 911 call is 0-12 seconds. However, our review of the operation disclosed that there are at least five levels of service that need to be analyzed in order to obtain a true understanding of the department's emergency response:

- incoming calls to the 911 system;
- time frame for 911 Operator to pass call to the Radio Dispatcher;
- time frame for Radio Dispatch to give call to an officer in the field;
- time frame for an officer to reach the call location; and

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- time frame for an officer to call in a report; therefore, be available for the next call.

Incoming calls are prioritized on a 0 to 4 basis, with 0 being the highest priority for dispatch.

Other than the incoming call wait time, there are no other statistics regularly reviewed for the purpose of analyzing actual police response time. CAD is supposed to receive calls, classify incidents and dispatch calls out to the patrol officers in the most effective manner possible. However, the system does not identify how long it takes the 911 operator to pass the call to the radio dispatcher or for the dispatcher to call an officer in the field. CAD's inconsistency in accurately time-stamping incoming calls makes it impossible to analyze the department's overall response time to emergencies. This deficiency is compounded by problems with radio dispatch, officers' non-compliance in reporting their arrival at the scene, and officers' not calling in reports in a timely and efficient manner. These issues are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

Recommendation:

The department should evaluate the total flow of information within the Bureau in order to determine if service levels, other than call answer times, are adequate. It is essential that the calls are dispatched in as near to real-time as possible, and that the officers in the field promptly notify the dispatcher of their "en route" status, as well as "arrival" status, so that the department can adequately analyze the effectiveness of its operations.

Call-In Compliance

Audit Finding (11):

The Bureau has advised us that the Patrol Division is working to increase officers' compliance with the requirement to call in upon arrival at the scene of the emergency. There is an arrival code on the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) in the patrol vehicles. Instead of using it, however, officers generally advise dispatchers that they are responding to a call by entering the "en route" button on their MDT's and entering the arrival and disposition codes at the end of the call.

Recommendation:

We recognize that when arriving at an emergency, officers may face conflicting demands and stresses. Yet we believe it is possible to increase compliance with this requirement. An article in the New York Times (Sept. 26, 2002) cited the NYPD's success in encouraging officers to report their arrival more promptly, as part of a larger effort to increase response time. For example, stickers have been placed on patrol car dashboards reminding officers to radio in immediately upon arrival. We recommend that the department review the NYPD's various efforts to increase

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call-in compliance and response time.

Audit Finding (12):

All incidents recorded by the CAD system are classified and prioritized on a 0 to 4 basis, with 0 being the most critical. The Bureau provided us with statistics of all incidents recorded in 2002. Our analysis of these statistics found that over 50 percent of the recorded incidents fell into five categories:

- The largest category was “Alarm – recorded or audible,” with 137,658 instances or 21.7 percent of the total. As noted in this report, 99.4 percent of the alarm incidents that are dispatched prove to be false. There were nearly two-and-one-half times as many alarm incidents recorded as the next highest category, “Aided Cases” (56,548).
- The third largest category “911-hangups” had 47,997 occurrences or 7.57 percent of the total. Often these hang-ups are the result of an error in making international calls or children playing with the phone.

These two categories combined represent nearly 30 percent of the total incidents reported to 911. Department protocols require that two cars respond to both of these categories of incidents, as they could involve a potentially serious situation.

Recommendation:

Department resources should be used to respond to genuine emergencies. The department is pursuing legislation to impose a graduated fine structure on automatic alarm abusers. In addition, we recommend that the department seek ways to educate the public about these issues, including:

- posting information on its Web site concerning compliance with the county ordinances on alarm permits; and
- undertaking a public information campaign about the importance of using 911 for emergencies only, as well as the need to remain on the phone with the operator, even when 911 is dialed in error, so that the operator can be assured that the call was made in error.

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Use of 911 Calls for Non-Emergencies

Audit Finding (13):

We found that in 2002 there were five categories of non-emergency (low-priority) complaints to 911 – totaling 45,859 or 7.2 percent of total calls received – that resulted in patrol cars being dispatched. Such incidents include: parking complaints (e.g. double-parked vehicles), noise disturbances and abandoned cars. Other calls involved reports of criminal mischief or larceny *after the fact*, often made in order to obtain a police report number for insurance purposes. An additional 29,350 incidents, or 4.2 percent of the total were classified as “miscellaneous,” e.g., calls about street lighting, lack of heat and similar matters that do not necessarily require notifying the police. These calls put an additional burden on the Bureau’s resources to make appropriate referrals; nor does the Bureau have the resources to follow through and track the resolution of the reported problems.

The Federal Communications Commission has designated “311” as the national three digit inquiry and response number for non-emergencies. Other jurisdictions, such as New York City and Baltimore are establishing these “311 systems.” Known as “customer relationship management” systems, they provide a multi-departmental response to safety and quality-of-life issues that do not necessarily require a police and/or emergency response.

The department does not have a centralized source from which the public can obtain information on such matters as how to file or obtain copies of police reports, how to pay parking violations, procedures for calling 911, and the like. One solution is to offer a list of “Frequently Asked Questions” on the NCPD Web site, as do many other jurisdictions.

Recommendation:

The department should consider:

- a. A “311 system” for Nassau County, which when used in coordination with an effective GIS/GPS system, could enable the analysis of service request patterns in geographic terms. Instituting such a system will help the department segregate non-emergency calls from urgent ones as they come into the Communications Bureau. A “311 system” could also provide better help for the county’s most disadvantaged citizens, as requests for service can be tracked and evaluated for inter-agency coordination and follow-up. When a 311 system is established, a public service campaign should be instituted which would inform the public of the purpose of 311 and when to call 311 instead of 911.

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- b. A Frequently Asked Questions ('FAQs') page on their Web site. This would reduce the number of calls to 911 asking about routine police-related matters.

Alarm Office

Background:

The Alarm Office processes all requests for burglar alarm permits, both residential and commercial. The Bureau assumed responsibility for this function in November 2000 from the Records Bureau. There were overtime costs associated with this function in 2001 and 2002, as the Bureau worked to ensure compliance with Section 8-40 of the Nassau County Administrative Code.

Prior to November 2000, the emphasis was on revenue collection, not compliance with the ordinance or confirmation of the alarm location. When the alarm permit function was transferred, the Bureau determined that its initial priority was to ensure the locations stated on the permits were accurate, were not duplicates, and that the "abuser" section of the ordinance was enforced to the best of the department's ability. In addition, the Bureau's Alarm Office has collected \$3.2 million in revenue since taking over the function. The Bureau has drafted amendments to the Administrative Code that would strengthen the "abuser" provisions of local law to provide for escalating fees for locations where there are frequent false alarms, and provide for a non-response declaration in certain instances.

The following personnel are assigned to the Alarm Office:

- 1 Police Communications Operator Supervisor
- 3 Police Communications Operators

Reduction of False Alarms

Audit Finding (14):

The department provided statistics indicating that in 2002 a total of 434,678 emergency calls were dispatched, and 129,834, or nearly 30 percent of the total, were responding to alarms. Of these, the department estimates that *129,055 or 99.4 percent were false*, mostly triggered as a result of installation problems, weather conditions or inadvertent activation by the property owner.

Department protocol calls for two police vehicles to respond to each alarm dispatch call. Records indicate that alarm calls average 30 to 45 minutes each. Therefore, we estimate that false alarm responses by the department cost a minimum of \$7 million annually. This estimate is

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based solely on the value of police officers' base salaries and does not include vehicle wear and tear, or the increased risk to both the responding officers and to the public when responding in emergency mode.

Recommendation:

a. It has been established that alarms represent 30 percent of total emergency dispatches, and that 99.4 percent of the alarm calls are false. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by the department, the County Legislature, and by private sector alarm companies. The 2002 alarm permit revenue of \$1.2 million does not begin to offset the costs of the false alarm responses. The department is using scarce police resources to respond to non-existent emergencies, which is both a public safety issue and an officer safety issue. Businesses, homeowners, and private sector alarm companies should be encouraged to work together to solve this problem. The possible solutions include: improved alarm technology and installation, better public awareness, and alarm control ordinances.

b. The Bureau is developing Alarm Abuser Legislation for submission to the County Legislature, a concept we endorse. Information provided from the Web site of the International Association of Chiefs of Police ("ICAP"), a non-profit membership organization of police executives, indicates that local ordinances and state laws have had a significant impact in reducing the number of false alarms. We obtained statistics from the Montgomery County, Maryland Police Department depicting a 45 percent reduction in false alarms since the inception of its false alarm program in March 1995, as well as from other police jurisdictions that also show significant reductions. We recommend that the department consult with the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA), which has a model ordinance posted on its Web site.

If legislation is enacted in Nassau aimed at reducing false alarms, we estimate that the county could save at least \$350,000 annually, using a conservative reduction rate of 5 percent per year. The department would also be able to deploy its police resources more effectively in areas such as crime prevention and community policing.

Implementation of Automated Alarm Attendant

Audit Finding (15):

The Bureau's minimum staffing standards require two to three positions per twelve-hour shift to be dedicated to alarm calls. We estimate that staffing these positions costs the Bureau a minimum of \$513,875 annually, exclusive of overtime. The Bureau is moving to install an automated "alarm attendant" software system capable of handling 16 calls per minute for permitted locations, thus freeing 911 operators from this task. The installation, which was scheduled to be completed in January 2003, has been delayed due to the lack of support from the

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Computer Aided Dispatch system (“CAD”) vendor in providing emulator software to link the CAD system with the automated alarm attendant software system. This automated application will reduce calls going through the 911 operators, but will not result in a reduction of alarm calls being dispatched.

Recommendation:

The department should give top priority to the implementation of the automated alarm attendant. Successful implementation of this feature will permit the Bureau to reduce one to two required 911-operator positions per shift, resulting in annualized savings of \$256,938 by reducing the number of hours required to be filled using overtime.

Re-Deployment

Audit Finding (16):

There is one Police Communications Operator Supervisor assigned to the Alarm Office; such supervisors earn an average of \$56,002 a year. This employee’s duties include coordinating all capital projects planning for the Bureau. We note that the employee is the supervisor of the area, but is not assigned to a squad and does not appear to have a fixed tour schedule. The function of the Alarm Office is primarily a fiscal one. The staff’s primary responsibility is to collect and process fees for alarm permits and renewals. The staff also maintains statistics on false alarm responses by the department. These duties and the related supervisory responsibilities would be more appropriately performed by an accounting assistant supervisory title.

Recommendation:

We recommend that an Accounting Assistant III be assigned to supervise the Alarm Office and that the PCOS be assigned back to 911 floor operations, which will better utilize his or her skills and specialized training. Usage of the Accounting Assistant III title, as compared with the PCOS title, would result in annual savings of approximately \$17,905, exclusive of overtime. Additional savings would be achieved by reducing overtime hours in 911 operations.

Audit Finding (17):

In addition to the supervisor assigned to the Alarm Office, 3 PCOs perform clerical and fiscal work there. As stated previously, these tasks can be more appropriately performed by an Accounting Assistant clerical title.

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Recommendation:

We recommend that three Accounting Assistant II positions be assigned to the Alarm Office and the PCOs be reassigned to duties directly connected with 911 operations, resulting in annual savings of approximately \$44,910, exclusive of overtime. Additional savings would be achieved by reducing overtime.

Alarm Permits

Audit Finding (18):

Over 99,000 permit numbers have been issued since the implementation of the alarm permit program in 1991. The Bureau believes that a significant number of them are no longer active, but has no information to document this. This information is necessary in order for the Bureau to determine if fees are owed to the County on permits that were never renewed.

Recommendation:

- a. The Bureau should request a report on the County Alarm Abuser Program (“CAAP”) to identify permit numbers that have expired or been replaced by newer permits. Additionally, records should be maintained to compare the number of renewal notices mailed against the number received, and a monthly exception report should be generated of permit numbers not renewed.
- b. The Bureau should consider placing information on the department’s Web site advising permit holders of the alarm regulations, as well as offering “tips” to assist property owners in maintaining alarm systems and preventing accidental activation. For example, the Phoenix, AZ police department posts this information on its Web site, noting the most common human errors and equipment malfunctions.

Audit Finding (19):

All alarm locations are entered into the CAAP in the CHIEF system, and renewal notices are sent out monthly. However, this system is to be replaced, as part of the automated alarm attendant project, since it does not have the ability to sort data by location.

Recommendation:

When the automated alarm system is fully implemented, it will enable electronic tracking of permit status. At that time, the Bureau should give top priority to identifying locations with expired permits and verify the reason for the expiration.

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Audit Finding (20):

The Bureau does not maintain adequate documentation of deposits for new permits, renewals and fines, which totaled more than \$3.2 million over the past three years. For example, even though the fees for some of their services vary, the records do not segregate different types of revenue (i.e. commercial or residential, new permit or renewal, and fines). As a result, the Bureau cannot verify the accuracy of the collection process. It is essential that the Bureau maintain records summarizing revenues by category, so that they can be traced to the bank deposits. The failure to perform this procedure is an internal control weakness, since it presents a risk that permits could be processed without payments, or conversely that checks could be deposited without recording the permit information.

Recommendation:

To strengthen internal controls over the collection process, the Bureau should maintain documentation to support its bank deposits, by category of revenue (i.e. commercial or residential, new permit or renewal, and fines).

Radio Office

Background:

The Radio Office coordinates the distribution, maintenance and repair of radio equipment throughout the department. The radio system consists of the mobile radios in the patrol vehicles, the portable radios used by officers on foot and the mobile data terminals (“MDT”) in the patrol vehicles. The infrastructure includes all of the components enabling the officers to communicate with their dispatchers. The radio dispatch is a component of 911 operations.

The administrative staff works extensively with the department’s primary radio vendor, Motorola, on servicing department equipment, including various repeater and receiver sites throughout the county. The primary issue confronting this unit is the replacement of the current land mobile radio system, which is over 20 years old and technologically obsolete. The department has hired a consultant (Booz, Allen, Hamilton) to assist in the development of a request for proposals (“RFP”) for a new radio system. It is anticipated that the RFP will be issued in the near future. To date, \$600,000 has been earmarked for the radio consultant. The replacement project is expected to cost between \$20 and \$40 million.

The personnel currently assigned to the Radio Office are as follows:

1 Police Sergeant
2 Police Officers

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2 Police Communications Operators

Civilianization

Audit Finding (21):

Currently, a Sergeant supervises the Radio Office. Sergeants in Nassau County earn an average of \$115,561. The Sergeant's duties do not involve any law enforcement functions and relate solely to managing the operations of the Radio Office.

Recommendation:

Suffolk County has several titles: Communications Mechanic, or Communications Technician I, II and III, for which the primary duties are to maintain and repair two-way radio mobile communications systems. We recommend that the department request that the Civil Service Commission create a title similar to Suffolk County's Communications Technician III to include administrative duties, meeting with consultants, handling bids and implementing new communications programs. Once a list is established for this title, we recommend replacing the Sergeant's position with this position. The comparable salary level in Nassau County is a grade 14. This will result in an annual savings of approximately \$59,429, exclusive of overtime.

Audit Finding (22):

In 2002, the department expended \$1.1 million on its maintenance contract with Motorola. Under the contract two full-time technicians are assigned to the department. These technicians are accompanied by two police officers assigned to the Radio Office. While police management of the radio system is important, it should not be necessary for police officers to accompany the technicians, provided there is an adequate level of supervision at secure police facilities. The police officers' duties do not involve any law enforcement functions, and relate solely to basic repair and routine maintenance of the system. We believe that civilian employees who have the necessary education and technical experience for the position could reasonably perform these duties.

Recommendation:

a. We recommend replacing the two police officers with a second level technical position to be called Communications Mechanic II, as is done in Suffolk. This would be equivalent to a grade 8 in Nassau County. Hiring two such civilian employees would result in annual savings of \$111,966, exclusive of overtime.

b. In order to reduce the department's reliance on the outside vendor's technicians at a minimum

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of \$125 per hour each, the department may wish to evaluate the feasibility of hiring Communications Technicians to perform the repair work in-house.

Re-Deployment

Audit Finding (23):

There are 2 PCOs assigned to the Radio Office. Their primary duties are to assist in maintenance of inventory and equipment slated for repair.

Recommendation:

We recommend that these 2 PCOs be re-assigned to 911-floor operations and that Police Service Aides (“PSAs”) capable of tracking inventory and updating electronic spreadsheets assume their duties. The PSAs are promoted to the same grade as a PCO after two years; however, based on the higher average salaries of the PCOs assigned to the Bureau, we estimate an approximate savings of \$20,896, exclusive of overtime. Additional savings would be achieved by reducing overtime.

Automatic Vehicle Locator Technology

Background:

The ability to mobilize patrol cars quickly and efficiently is critical in emergency response. This is best accomplished through systems referred to as Automated Vehicle Locator (“AVL”), which provide physical locations of patrol vehicles on a real-time basis. AVL enables dispatchers to identify the nearest available vehicle for deployment, so that the response time is minimized. AVL can be an extremely important tool in the first hours following a large-scale emergency.

There are several other advantages of AVL. It can serve as a very effective monitoring tool and can help detect unauthorized stops or detours. It also provides the ability to capture the arrival and departure times of the patrol cars automatically and thus obviates the need for manual reports/call backs.

Suffolk County has an AVL system and is using it effectively. Suffolk’s system is integrated with the overall emergency response system and thus allows the county to optimize the use of mobile resources.

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Audit Finding (24):

The department does not currently utilize AVL technology in its emergency response operation. This technology would serve as an invaluable navigational tool by saving significant time in identifying the safest and quickest route to an emergency scene and enable emergency dispatchers to dispatch the nearest available vehicle. It would also result in optimal utilization of our resources and significantly enhance our monitoring capabilities.

Recommendation:

The department should examine the feasibility of purchasing AVL technology as soon as possible, either in a “stand alone” mode or as part of any other system currently being used by the department. We note that the Suffolk County Police Department is currently using fully integrated AVL technology in its patrol vehicles.

Replacement of Radio System

Audit Finding (25):

The radio system is the only means of communication with officers on patrol. The available channels are frequently overburdened. There are only four frequencies available to dispatch patrol cars in the county’s eight precincts. This results in each 911-dispatcher handling calls involving up to 40 cars in 2 precincts simultaneously. In addition, the equipment allows for no interoperability with other county, local, state and federal agencies, impeding the ability of the department to coordinate operations with other police jurisdictions. For example, there are 24 separate law enforcement jurisdictions operating within the county. (We note that a significant issue in the September 11, 2001 rescue efforts was difficulty with radio communications due to the use of incompatible equipment by the various agencies responding to the disaster.)

At present, Nassau County does not have the mechanism in place to provide for a multi-jurisdictional coordinated response to an emergency. A room at the Communications Bureau is set up for multiple county agencies to manage emergencies. Equipment incompatibilities and the lack of a system for coordinating radio communications among the various agencies, however, would impede efforts to control response during a large-scale disaster. The last significant large-scale emergency in the county involved the Avianca crash in 1992.

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Recommendation:

The department should:

- a. give top priority to replacing the current radio system. An inadequate radio system endangers the safety and welfare of police officers and the public. In addition, the department should work with the county's Office of Grants Management to ensure that the radio replacement system is eligible for federal funding. It is essential that the replacement radio system include the latest available technology, including AVL. This will be particularly important in the first hours of a large-scale emergency.
- b. review the feasibility of establishing an Operational Practices Board, as recommended by the New York State 911 Board. This group would establish protocols, including assignment of lead agencies in the coordination of various types of emergency responses.

Teletype Office

Background:

The Teletype Office coordinates requests for information from the NYSPIN (New York State Police Information Network). The system relays requests from police officers on patrol. Typical requests include verification of driver's licenses and license plate checks. There are 26 NYSPIN terminals located within the department; an additional 20 are assigned to other law enforcement offices in the county. The teletype function is considered part of 911 operations and is required to be staffed at all times. All police communication bureaus are required to have a tactical agency coordinator (but not necessarily a police officer) certified by the state in transmission of NYSPIN data. Approximately 30 members of the Bureau are certified for teletype operations. There is currently one police officer assigned to the teletype function; additional civilian staff are used as required by the roll calls.

Civilianization

Audit Finding (26):

Currently, the teletype office is coordinated by a police officer (officers earn an average of \$91,642). The duties of the teletype area do not require a police officer and are inter-changeable with those of a PCO certified in NYSPIN. Currently, an off-duty PCO assumes the duties of the police officer when required.

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Recommendation:

We recommend that the police officer be replaced by a PCO, freeing the officer to be re-assigned to an area that would make better use of the officer's training and skills. This would result in an annual savings of \$43,097, exclusive of overtime. The PCOS could assume any supervisory responsibilities and related duties as departmental coordinator for NYSPIN.

Adequacy of Training

Audit Finding (27):

The Bureau is required to review NYSPIN entries made by the precincts for content and accuracy. Entries are compared to the original reports on the Computerized History Information Enforcement Files system ("CHIEF"), before being approved. Staff must be certified by the state in order to use NYSPIN. It is imperative that the NYSPIN entries be timely and accurate as they are the basis for information being transmitted on a local, state and federal level. As a result of the chronic staff shortage, however, a NYSPIN-certified employee is not always on duty, necessitating additional overtime.

Recommendation:

We recommend cross-training additional PCOs to become NYSPIN-certified, and that personnel be assigned on a rotating basis to ensure the availability of qualified personnel for the NYSPIN function. In so doing, overtime costs in this area will be minimized.

911 Operations

Background:

The 911 Operations Area is the point of initial contact for members of the public with the Nassau County Police Department. As mentioned previously, this area is chronically understaffed, requiring increasing amounts of overtime coverage in order to meet the minimum staffing requirements mandated by the department.

As of March 31, 2003, the area consisted of three units that require coverage on a 24-hour, seven-day per week basis and for which the department has promulgated minimum staffing standards:

911 Floor Operations

Case Offense

Teletype Office

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The staff currently assigned to the 911 Operations area is as follows:

911 Floor Operations

8 Sergeants

12 Police Communications Operator Supervisors

153 Police Communications Operators

Case Offense

2 Police Case Offense Transcribers II

8 Police Case Offense Transcribers I

Training Office

2 Police Communication Operator Supervisors

Significant Wait Time for Reporting of Incidents

Audit Finding (28):

The Police Case Offense Transcribers (“PCOTs”) record the disposition of 911 emergencies called in by the officers on patrol, as well as other incidents called in from other police divisions. These case reports are in turn forwarded to the precincts for classification by the desk officers.

We were advised that, when calling in their reports, officers in the field encounter significant wait times for a PCOT to record the disposition. The Bureau does not maintain statistics for the purpose of analyzing such call wait times. Officers call in reports from precincts or police phone boxes located around the county, not over their radios. Obviously, one factor in police response time is the time officers spend in filing reports, which can preclude his or her availability for other calls.

Recommendation:

The department should evaluate how much police time is spent calling in reports. To get back on patrol as soon as possible after responding to a 911 call, it is essential that reports from police officers be handled expeditiously.

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Issuance of Protocols for Proper Classification of Incidents

Audit Finding (29):

The department reports on-going issues with the so-called Swift Justice System, the reporting vehicle for the case offense area. It is the responsibility of the Case Offense Section to transmit the reports from the police officers to the precincts, where desk officers classify cases by penal law category, refer them to the Detective Division for investigation or files if no further action is required. We were unable to obtain any documentation regarding protocols for incident classification, which is necessary to assure uniformity in the Nass-Stat system. We note that a New York Times article (July 14, 2002) reported significant variances between the statistics published by the department and those reported to the Nassau District Attorney's Office, as well as to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice.

Recommendation:

The department should issue protocols regarding the proper classification of incidents. This recommendation is not limited to the Bureau, but to the Patrol and Detective Division as well. We acknowledge that the officer's judgment must enter into classifications; however, the desk officers at the precincts must be properly trained in order to ensure that statistical reporting criteria are met.

Administration Office

Background:

The administration office manages the Bureau. Its functions include scheduling roll calls, processing overtime requests, generating reports, and other administrative tasks.

Currently, the staff assigned to the Administration Office is as follows:

- 1 Inspector (Commanding Officer)
- 1 Lieutenant (functions as Deputy Commanding Officer)
- 1 Police Officer
- 2 Police Communications Operators

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Civilianization

Audit Finding (30):

Currently, there is one police officer assigned to the administration office (average salary: \$91,642). The officer's duties are not related to law enforcement, but rather to administrative responsibilities in the Bureau.

Recommendation:

We recommend civilianizing the police officer's position with a clerical employee, such as a PSA, resulting in annual savings of approximately \$53,545, exclusive of overtime.

Re-Deployment

Audit Finding (31):

Currently, two PCOs in the Administrative Office are assigned to clerical and administrative tasks such as tracking overtime hours, preparation of roll calls and other miscellaneous duties. Their responsibilities do not involve 911 floor operations, unless there is a severe roll-call shortage.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the two PCOs be re-assigned to floor operations and that PSAs assume their administrative duties. The PSAs are promoted to the same grade as a PCO after two years; however, based on the higher average salaries of the PCOs assigned to the Bureau, we estimate an approximate savings of \$20,896, exclusive of overtime.

Time and Leave Section

Background:

The Time and Leave Section maintains time and leave records for all Bureau personnel, both sworn and civilian. Section personnel maintain records both on the CHIEF system and on the PDCN230 forms (Departmental Time Cards). In addition, they maintain manual records for the swapping of tours by Bureau personnel, referred to as "mutuals;" these require the approval of the commanding officer. The Section also tracks leave abusers in accordance with the CSEA contract.

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The number of personnel currently assigned to the Time and Leave Section as of March 31, 2003 is as follows:

- 2 Police Communication Operator Supervisors
- 2 Police Communication Operators

Re-Deployment of Specialized Personnel

Audit Finding (32):

In our review of the Time and Leave Section we determined that, in addition to supervising, the two PCOS are performing clerical duties. We have also determined that the hours worked by these supervisors overlap on Wednesdays due to the Bureau's Monday-Friday 12-hour tours for civilian administrative employees, and that these hours are not congruent with those of their subordinates. Adequate coverage does not require two supervisors to be assigned to this section, nor for the supervisor to be on a 12-hour schedule.

Recommendation:

We recommend that both PCOS be assigned back to floor operations, where their skills and specialized training would be more effectively used. An Accounting Assistant III should be assigned to supervise the Time and Leave Section and an Accounting Assistant II should be assigned to perform clerical duties. These titles, as compared with the PCOS would result in annual savings of approximately \$40,332, exclusive of overtime. Additional savings would be achieved by reducing overtime in the 911 area.

Audit Finding (33):

In addition to the two supervisors assigned to the Time and Leave Section, there are two PCOs performing clerical work. As previously stated, these tasks can be more appropriately performed by an Accounting Assistant clerical title.

Recommendation:

We recommend that two Accounting Assistant IIs be assigned to the Time and Leave Section and that the two PCOs be re-assigned to duties directly connected with the 911-floor operation. Use of the Accounting Assistant II title, as compared with the PCO title, would result in annual savings of approximately \$29,940, exclusive of overtime. Additional savings would be achieved by reducing overtime in the 911-floor operation.

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Adjustment of Employees' Anniversary Dates

Audit Finding (34):

In our review of time and leave, we noted that there were 41 employees whose anniversary dates were adjusted due to leave-without-pay status, i.e., they have taken days off in excess of their leave entitlement. This issue was part of a department-wide review, instituted by the Payroll Section of the Comptroller's Office, of civilian employees who had not had their dates adjusted due to a no-pay status over a period of eight years (1994-2002). This adjustment occurred in May 2002. The Bureau advised that in November 2002 additional adjustments were made for 26 employees, many of whom had received prior adjustments. Failure to make anniversary leave adjustments in a timely manner can result in employees receiving anniversary bonus vacation and personal leave days to which they may not be entitled.

Recommendation:

The department must adjust anniversary dates in a timely manner, to ensure that time and leave records are maintained accurately and to prevent employees from receiving leave entitlements for which they may not be eligible.

Inaccurate Crediting of Leave Entitlements

Audit Finding (35):

As noted in the previous finding, a significant number of employees periodically may be on leave without pay. As a rule, leave entitlements may not be used before the end of a pay period; however, the supervisor of the Time and Leave Section informed us that the CHIEF system permits leave accruals to be used before the end of the pay period to cover leave without pay within the same period. This practice was confirmed with the Personnel and Accounting Bureau of the department.

The department should confer with the County Director of Labor Relations because this practice appears contrary to Section 42-5 (a) of the Civil Service Employees Association ("CSEA") contract, which states that leave is earned "per bi-weekly pay period of service." The issue is further compounded by inconsistent treatment; i.e., employees can request that their accrual not be used, so that they will carry forward a half-day of sick leave or vacation leave. They therefore have an option not available to other CSEA represented employees in the county and which is contrary to county policy.

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Recommendation:

The department should discontinue the practice of allowing employees to use leave entitlements in a manner contrary to the CSEA contract. Sound management precludes the use of leave before the end of the pay period in which it is earned. In addition, the CHIEF system should be modified to accrue time only at the end of a pay period. Any employee who does not have sufficient time should be placed in a leave-without-pay status, and the appropriate adjustments made to their personnel records.

Computerization of Time and Attendance Records

Audit Finding (36):

Maintenance of time and attendance records is very cumbersome. There are two roll calls, one each for administrative and 911-floor operations, which serve as the only record for attendance. No time sheets are maintained, as there is no requirement for the employee to sign in or out. The roll call serves as the only official record of the employee's presence, both for regular shifts and overtime hours. All pre-approved leave entitlements, as well as tour changes and "mutuals," are entered and cross-referenced, if necessary, in the Bureau diary. A separate sick leave report is generated on a daily basis. These labor-intensive practices exacerbate the department's problem maintaining accurate time and leave records. For example, our review of roll-calls and the blotters kept for the period July 2002 showed numerous discrepancies in actual hours worked, and at least one error as to an employee's sick leave status.

Recommendation:

Bureau roll calls should be computerized, so that changes will automatically carry forward to other time records. The Bureau should work with the Information Systems Bureau to implement an electronic blotter to assist in managing its roll call, as is done by the Suffolk County Police Department. This recommendation should be incorporated into any replacement system for CHIEF, which would allow roll-call changes to automatically carry forward to other time records.

Audit Finding (37):

Due in part to the Bureau's understaffing, numerous tour changes and overtime requests are processed to achieve required minimum staffing levels. These changes and requests, as well as the day-to-day timekeeping of the Bureau, require the manual preparation of numerous time and leave records. This practice, as well as the practice of copying some records onto another document, makes this process inefficient and time consuming.

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We were unable to analyze all of the Bureau's voluminous time and leave records, due to time constraints. Instead, we chose one day's activity, Wednesday, August 14, 2002, for analysis. In our review of this one-day's activity, however, we were able to depict the weaknesses in the maintenance of these forms, as well as inefficiencies in staffing.

Recommendation:

a. The Bureau's labor-intensive process of maintaining its time and leave records could be simplified and modernized by using computerized forms, eliminating the need to prepare all forms manually. Adjustments to assignment schedules due to daily fluctuations in staffing levels could be made as needed. Computer-generated statistics regarding staffing levels and break coverage could also be prepared.

b. In our visit to Suffolk County's Communications Bureau we found that they have been using an electronic blotter for the past few years and are working on a paperless reporting system, to be implemented during the second half of 2003. We recommend that the Nassau County Police Department consider putting such a system in place in its Communications Bureau.

Vacation Picks by Seniority

Audit Finding (38):

Within the Bureau, requests for vacation times for civilian employees are granted on a strict seniority basis, apparently in conformance with the way the police contracts grant vacation picks. During the summer months, this tends to create short roll-call situations similar to those incurred by officers, as many day-tour senior employees choose to take summer vacations. Since the PCOs are civilian employees, their seniority status is governed by Section 12-2 of the CSEA contract, which states: "Seniority shall prevail in the choice of vacations wherever practicable and consistent with the needs of the department." Section 42-4 of the CSEA contract states: "However, vacation time shall be granted only in accordance with the administrative needs of the department." Therefore, the Bureau is not precluded from granting vacation based on tour or squad, as well as by seniority.

Recommendation:

The department should review its policy regarding the granting of leave time for civilian employees. We recommend a vacation policy that is consistent with the requirements of the CSEA contract and administrative needs of the department.

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Granting of Overtime to Sick Leave Abusers

Audit Finding (39):

Section 42-5 of the current CSEA contract states, “If an employee utilizes sick leave abusively (Example: inadequately justified, excessive and/or patterned absences), the employee shall be ineligible for voluntary overtime until he or she completes three (3) pay periods without utilizing sick leave.” Although the Bureau normally precludes sick leave abusers from working pre-approved overtime, they may be allowed to work overtime if, after the assignment of overtime to eligible employees, minimum staffing levels still cannot be met. Our review of the 2002 time and leave records for two of the Bureau’s designated ‘sick leave abusers’ disclosed, however, that one was the Bureau’s *top* overtime earner. This employee’s earnings more than doubled due to overtime. The other employee was one of the Bureau’s top 20 overtime earners. We also found that these two employees were granted overtime and some type of leave in more than 60 percent of the weeks in 2002. Additionally, the top overtime earner worked 21 days in which both overtime was earned and leave was taken.

Recommendation:

Although the Bureau is understaffed, every effort should be made to comply with this contract requirement before granting overtime to a sick-leave abuser. Overtime should not be permitted to be earned on the same day in which an employee is using leave time.

Overtime for Daylight Saving Time

Audit Finding (40):

A review of a night tour employee’s PDCN 207 “Request For Credit For Extra Time Worked” form dated Saturday 10/26/02, disclosed that one hour overtime was granted as compensation for working an extra hour for “Daylight Saving Time”. A review of the night tour roll-call for 10/26/02 to 10/27/02, disclosed that there were 36 employees in total, including a supervising Sergeant, who received this Daylight Saving Time adjustment. The department does not have a formal agreement authorizing this practice. Further inquiries with the department’s Payroll and Accounting section revealed that the entire department receives the benefit of the additional hour compensation for Daylight Saving Time. Also, there is no adjustment for the hour lost due to the Daylight Saving Time adjustment made during the spring. Over a number of years, the impact of this compensation on a departmental basis would be significant.

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Recommendation:

There appears to be no formal agreement or policy concerning employee compensation for the Daylight Saving Time adjustment. Therefore, the department should obtain a formal opinion from the county's Office of Labor Relations as to how to compensate employees whose work schedules are affected by Daylight Saving Time.

Roll-call Procedures

Audit Finding (41):

The Tour Supervisor performs a daily head count of 911-Floor Operations employees and "calls the roll" by entering the names of those present onto the "Attendance Blotter." As per the Time and Leave Section's Supervisors, however, no entry is required to "sign off" the employees at the completion of either day or night tours. An entry is made only if the employee leaves prior to the end of a scheduled tour.

Recommendation:

The Tour Supervisor should "call the roll" at the beginning and at the completion of these tours. The County's Time Sheet ('Compt.-3024 6/77 Rev. 5/97') used by the majority of county departments requires each employee to write his/her time "in" and "out" each day or account for the time in some manner. The departments may elect to have a designated timekeeper(s) record the entries for all or some of their employees.

Breaks at the Beginning and End of Tour

Audit Finding (42):

In an examination of the sheets used by employees to sign up for their half-hour breaks and meal times, we found that employees were scheduled to take their half-hour breaks at the *start* of their established tour, even though the nominal purpose of such "breaks" is to break up consecutive hours of often-stressful work. Employees are still required to report for duty at their designated time, but do not start working until their half-hour 'break' is over.

Entries made in the Attendance Blotter of August 14, 2002 indicated that some PCOs shortened regular tours or their overtime by taking meal breaks at the end of the tour. We were informed that this is permitted only if the supervisor determines that there is sufficient coverage.

Employees sign out on the Blotter as "on meal, off-duty". However, we also noted that one employee, who was 'Absent With Leave' ('AWL') from 1600-1900, was allowed to leave one

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hour earlier at 1500 by taking a ‘meal break.’

Additionally, we were informed that employees are also allowed to leave prior to the end of their tour by using one of their half-hour breaks. This also requires the supervisor’s approval, but the early departure is not recorded in the Attendance Blotter.

Recommendation:

The Bureau should review practices with regard to granting breaks as follows:

- a. The Bureau should not allow employees to take breaks at the beginning or end of a tour. The purpose of the half-hour breaks is to mitigate the associated stress that this job entails. The breaks should be assigned to divide up large blocks of work time.
- b. Due to the nature of the work performed by this Bureau and its inherent volatility, allowing an employee to leave before the scheduled time may result in insufficient coverage, and thus generate the need for additional overtime. Lack of coverage obviously can have severe repercussions. Since most emergencies cannot be anticipated, and in light of the fact that overtime is authorized to meet minimum staffing levels, allowing an employee to leave prior to the end of their overtime period is not a prudent management decision.

Retaining Original Source Documents

Audit Finding (43):

Bureau Employees other than those assigned to the 0700-1900 and 1900-0700 tours for 911-Floor Operations and Case Offense are required personally to enter their names and their arrival and departure times onto a “yellow pad.” This information is then copied on a daily basis by the designated “blotter recorder” onto the attendance blotter and discarded after their transfer.

We noted instances in which employees (including supervisors) were either not signed in or signed out on the attendance blotter. We were told that the transfer of information may have caused this oversight.

Recommendation:

The “Records Retention and Disposition Schedule CO-2,” promulgated by the New York State Education Department Archives Government Records Services and adopted by the county, requires “employee’s cards, sheets, or books” to be retained for six years. Daily attendance sheets from the “yellow pad” should be retained as they constitute the original source document

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and can be used to resolve any questions/issues that may arise. This would also eliminate the need to copy the information contained therein onto the attendance blotter, avoiding unnecessary use of staff-hours and the potential for error.

Adequate Supervisory Coverage for Case Offense Section

Audit Finding (44):

There are no assigned supervisors in the Case Offense section for the day tours on Saturdays and for the night tours on Wednesdays through Saturdays. Additionally, according to the Bureau's scheduling, if either of the three tour supervisors were out on leave, there apparently would be no back-up coverage. It has been the Bureau's practice to have the desk supervisor provide coverage in these instances. However, in light of the desk supervisor's other responsibilities, this does not appear to be adequate supervision for the Case Offense Section.

Recommendation:

The Bureau should endeavor to provide adequate supervisory coverage for the Case Offense Section.

Recording of Overtime Earned by Shift

Audit Finding (45):

Currently, the Bureau maintains schedules that denote overtime earned on an employee-by-employee basis, on a departmental basis and by event codes. These schedules can be used to ascertain overtime earned over a specified period. However, the Bureau maintains no records of overtime earned by shift, e.g. from 0700-1900, 1100-2300, etc.

Recommendation:

The Bureau should maintain records denoting overtime earned by shifts for all day and night tours. This would allow for more efficient tracking and monitoring of both staffing and overtime assignments.

Proper Temperature Control Environment for Equipment

Audit Finding (46):

The Commander of the Bureau informed us that the equipment used by the Bureau is not located in a temperature-controlled environment, or one that is fireproof. There is no back-up cooling

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system. Additionally, there are no water sprinklers, nor is the equipment raised to prevent any water damage.

Recommendation:

The equipment used by the Bureau should be located in a temperature-controlled, fireproof environment. A back-up cooling system and water sprinklers should be installed. Equipment should be raised to prevent any water damage.

Appendix I

Police Department's Response

Audit Finding (1)

Communications Bureau, prior to the last Police Communications Operator exam, requested that hiring eligibility be extended to Suffolk County and that local colleges be contacted regarding announcing the exam. The purpose of contacting colleges was to attract candidates who would prefer weekend work. Both of these requests were complied with. As a result of these efforts the most recent list provided 287 candidates of whom 45 are from Suffolk County. The previous list provided only 55 candidates.

Changes in the work schedule will require careful analysis of impact on operations and the Department's Office of Labor Relations must be consulted as to whether this has to be negotiated.

Auditor's Comment:

We commend the department on expanding their pool of potential candidates to Suffolk County. In the future the department might want to consider requesting that the hiring eligibility be extended to Queens County. We are also cognizant of the restrictions placed on the department via labor agreements or memorandums of agreement. However, we urge the department to give careful consideration to discontinuing the 12-hour shifts and substitute a tour schedule that better reflects the Bureau's needs.

Audit Finding (2)

The following should be noted regarding the comparison made between Nassau and Suffolk overtime. Suffolk County has 147 civilian employees compared to 199 for Nassau. Suffolk's 147, because of their different work schedule equates to 160 civilians in Nassau, leaving a difference of thirty-nine (39). (The auditors were provided with a copy of a grievance settlement stipulation that directs Nassau County Police Department to provide the breaks that are in our schedule).

Nassau Communications Bureau performs many functions that Suffolk does not. Those costs appear in other areas of Suffolk's budget. Those functions include our Alarm program, which in 2002 alone generated \$1,260,302 and eliminated thousands of police dispatches. Suffolk has no such program. Prior to Communications Bureau instituting its Alarm program the Department had a disjointed program controlled by a Sergeant and an Accountant Assistant II in Records Bureau that barely functioned and took in almost no money. Integrating this function wholly into Communications Bureau operations has been a tremendous success both financially and operationally.

Suffolk's telephone and radio functions are not part of Communications nor is Communications responsible for CAD oversight. Most significantly, Suffolk does not have a Case Intake function in Communications. This alone accounts for sixteen (16) full-time employees plus a substantial overtime commitment. When Case Intake was originally shifted from Data Processing to Communications Bureau there were thirty-six (36) full-time civilians and two (2) full-time sworn supervisors.

Police Communications Operators are scheduled to work 1,827 hours per year. The addition of thirty (30) Police Communications Operators would add 54,810 hours of scheduled work to our roll calls and would reduce overtime. Its impact would be limited however because we have many overtime hours offered that now go unfilled. The addition of sixty (60) operators would dramatically reduce overtime, allow us to deny sick leave abusers overtime and reduce our call waiting time.

Auditor's Comment:

We are in agreement that the Bureau is chronically understaffed, based on its own staffing guidelines for 911 floor operations. Eight to ten positions require overtime on every tour of duty. However, the fact remains that the Bureau's workweek is 4.25 hours less than that of Suffolk's police communications bureau. The Bureau's relatively lower productivity in terms of work-hours per week is costing the county approximately \$1.2 million per year. The department should revisit current staffing guidelines with the aim of instituting a more flexible work tour structure that would increase the number of employee work-hours actually devoted to work. In addition the Department should use appropriate titles for work ancillary to actual 911 operations, i.e. administrative functions, and examine the feasibility of hiring additional employees to minimize overtime hours.

Audit Finding (3)

Teletype orders dated July 18, 1994 and January 5, 1995 "Modification of Shift Differential Baseline for Civilian Employees" and "Additional Modification of Shift Differential Baseline for Civilian Employees" guide night differential allowances. Both of the aforementioned teletype orders referring to Chart 12B were signed by then Deputy Commissioner of Police William J. Willett and resulted from directives of the County Controller's Office. The first order reduced night differential from 76 to 70 hours and the second from 70 to 68 hours. Communications Bureau has complied with the teletype.

Auditor's Comment:

The teletype orders mentioned in the above response should not be interpreted as meaning all Chart 12B employees should receive shift differential. Only those employees fulfilling the requirements under the current CSEA contract should receive additional shift differential.

Audit Finding (4)

The recommendation that Police Communications Operators apply their skills to the primary task of the Bureau did not address the fact that Police Communications Operators assigned to support positions are available for both the overtime pool and to the floor on straight time. Having Police Communications Operator support staff provides the option not to fill all day roll call floor positions because the reserve pool is available to reduce call-waiting times. This saves overtime dollars. Even in a circumstance where Communications Bureau was so well staffed that we didn't consistently face roll call shortages, the elimination of position interoperability would not be cost effective. There will be no cost savings, as the auditors suggest, if we hire a grade 8 to replace a grade 9 and the grade eight does not afford the Command the flexibility to utilize the grade 8 during shortages and emergencies.

Auditor's Comment:

We recognize that the 21 Police Communication Operators and Supervisors are available for both the overtime pool and to the floor on straight time. However, returning these employees to their specific job duties would not only result in a significant reduction in overtime but they also would be applying their skills to the primary task of the bureau, rather than to administrative duties. Countless hours have been spent in training these highly skilled senior employees, and the majority of their availability in case of an emergency is during the midweek day tours, which accounts for less than 20% of the time needed by the bureau.

Audit Finding (5)

We agree with this finding.

Auditor's Comment:

The department should move quickly to locate a fully functional enhanced alternate 911 Center, off-site from Police Headquarters, that can be brought up to speed in the event of a large-scale public emergency.

Audit Finding (6)

We agree with this finding, however, we have concern about the employee we can attract due to salary offered. The Commanding Officer of Communications Bureau met with the then Director of Civil Service regarding this matter in January of 2002 and to date no new job description has been released. Existing titles/salaries will not provide the Department with an employee capable of carrying out the position's responsibilities.

Auditor's Comment:

The department and the administration should continue to work with the Civil Service Commission to develop a specific civil service title for a position of this importance to the department. In addition, we recommend Web-based advertising, or the use of police-oriented periodicals to attract desirable candidates.

Audit Finding (7)

We agree, however we have the same concerns as expressed in our response to audit finding #6.

Auditor's Comment:

See auditor's comment to audit finding #6.

Audit Finding (8)

The suggestion to replace Police Communications Operators (grade 9) assigned to the Telephone Office with grade 8 Telecommunications Aides will not result in cost savings. The purported savings from a 9 to an 8 is dwarfed by both the savings and public safety value of having all the employees capable of participating in the overtime pool and being available to the floor during emergencies and shortages. During the snowstorm of December 5, 2003, Police Communications Operators assigned to support positions were utilized to reduce the backlog of 911 calls, many that were legitimate emergencies and also saved the County money by reducing the number of overtime call-ins. Compartmentalizing the various functions of Communications Bureau is a formula for disaster. Moving the support Police Communications Operators to the floor would provide a temporary infusion to the staffing levels, when those levels decrease or workload temporarily increases there is no reserve. This risk to public safety is not worth the insignificant savings produced from a 9 to an 8. Also, having this job title compartmentalization reduces the Commanding Officer's ability to move employees from assignment to assignment based upon Command need or employee job performance.

Auditor's Comment:

The practice of having staff on reserve may be helpful in the short term, but in the long term, a more efficient use of resources would be to achieve and maintain appropriate staffing levels. It is a misuse of resources to use extensively trained Police Communications Operators to perform administrative tasks.

Audit Finding (9)

The Department is implementing all the suggestions in this finding. An RFP will be going out shortly.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (10)

We agree with this finding and are working within the framework of the CAD RFP to have the ability to perform this analysis.

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (11)

We are reviewing this issue and will attempt to increase compliance.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (12)

We agree with recommendation (b) regarding the posting of information about alarm permits and ordinances on our Web site.

Regarding the recommendation to “undertake a public information campaign about the importance of using 911 for emergencies only” we strongly disagree. Many calls that require a police response are not defined by the public as emergencies. If all non life threatening calls are directed to 311 but require a police response it will only require a transfer to 911 and we will be paying twice for a degraded level of service. Using this methodology will cost more and lower rather than raise the level of customer satisfaction. If there is any public education campaign it should originate with Police Department employees who are familiar with Police Department operations.

Auditor's Comment:

Bureau personnel have acknowledged that many calls flowing through 911 are service oriented and not within the purview of the Police Department to address. However, they only offer limited support for a 311-telephone system, advocating its use only for non-police matters such as potholes or faulty street lamps. Our recommendation is to encourage the public to use 911 exclusively for police emergencies. Under the present system all non-emergency calls that require a police response are dispatched through 911, reducing the availability of 911 operators for emergencies. We urge the Department to investigate other options for handling police non-emergencies that do not involve the 911 operators. For example, police non-emergency calls could be dispatched from the 311-call center directly to the precinct. We suggest that the department examine the 311 system being employed by New York City; in 2003, NYPD transferred many of its “quality of life” hotlines to the city-wide 311 system.

Audit Finding (13)

We disagree with this recommendation (a) as a GIS/GPS analysis of service requests will not help in the instant when calls are made and received.

We agree with recommendation (b) regarding putting an FAQ page on the website and will attempt to do that, however, we do not believe that this will have a substantial impact on 911 volume.

Auditor's Comment:

It is our understanding that the proper utilization of the Nassau County GIS/GPS analysis is part of the basis for the Nass-stat analysis. Therefore there can be pro-active policing taking place in areas that are shown to have certain types of activities that will assist department in understanding deployment needs.

Again, we view all efforts to reduce calls to 911 to be positive, and, in particular information such as when and how to file a police report for accidents or other matters would be useful to the public.

Audit Finding (14)

We agree with recommendation (observation) (a).

The Police Communications Operator Supervisor who oversees the Alarm Office has been an active member of the False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) for two years prior to the audit. The Nassau County Police Department, through its work with FARA, had developed alarm abuser legislation for submission to the County Legislature. If this legislation is enacted our research indicates that the savings to the County will be substantially higher than the \$350,000 estimate provided by the auditors. (observation) (b).

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the department's efforts to reduce false alarm dispatches, as they place a tremendous burden on the police resources of the county. We have also looked at some of the statistics provided by the False Alarm Reduction Association and agree that a preventive measure device, such as alarm abuser legislation with a graduated fee structure, would be useful in combating this problem. We urge the department to submit this legislation to the county legislature at its earliest opportunity. We also acknowledge that our estimate was based on a very conservative savings of 5% annually over current costs, however, that cumulatively, over time the savings would be much greater.

Audit Finding (15)

We agree and are taking the necessary steps for implementation.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (16)

We strongly disagree. See comments regarding audit finding 8.

Not only will the savings suggested never be realized, the compartmentalization of job functions will destroy the three year effort by the Commanding Officer of Communications Bureau to integrate all job functions in the command. This integration results in cost savings and operational efficiency as all Police Communications Operator Supervisors can supervise anywhere in the Bureau and can work on the floor when necessary. A Police Communications Operator Supervisor cannot supervise an Accountant Assistant II. An Accountant Assistant II cannot be expected to understand the functionality of CAD, 911 and Case Intake. An Accountant Assistant III cannot supervise the Operations Desk in an emergency.

Additionally, the savings suggested will not be realized, it doesn't reflect the actual salary of the Police Communications Operator Supervisor assigned to the Alarm Section nor the eventual difference between top salaried eights and nines.

Auditor's Comment:

As noted previously, we understand the Bureau's concerns regarding compartmentalizing of their operations and the need for cross training in all areas of the command. However, we believe that the operations of the Alarm Office are primarily a fiscal one and should be staffed by personnel whose expertise is in financial matters.

Audit Finding (17)

Disagree. Refer to Audit Finding 8 and 16.

Auditor's Comment:

Please see our comments regarding Audit Finding #16.

Audit Finding (18)

We already do this on a monthly basis (since 11/2000). recommendation (a).

We agree with recommendation (b) and will attempt to implement.

Auditor's Comment:

In a meeting with the Police Communications Operator in charge of the Alarm Fiscal Office we specifically asked if the bureau could identify the number of alarm permits that are no longer active, in order to come up with a number of active permits in the county. We were told that information was not available at this time. The only information we were given were summary sheets showing how much revenue was collected on a monthly basis.

In addition, there is no breakdown by type of revenue as noted in our audit comment. The permits paid should be reconciled with the amount received and deposited into the bank in order to ensure that the deposits are properly reconciled.

Audit Finding (19)

The replacement of CAPP is in the Department's design of the automated attendant project.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (20)

A detailed internal control structure that addresses and mitigates the risk of a permit being processed without payment or conversely a check being deposited without recording the permit is in place.

Auditor's Comment:

We disagree that an effective internal control plan is in place with the appropriate controls over the flow of the revenue into the account. The records relative to alarm permits do not segregate different types of revenue and, as a result, the Bureau cannot verify the accuracy of the collection process. It is essential that the Bureau maintain records summarizing revenues by category, so that they can be traced to the bank deposits.

Audit Finding (21)

We agree with this recommendation, however, we have the same reservations as with the replacement of the Lieutenant in the Telephone Office.

We have concern about the employee we can attract due to the salary offered. The Commanding Officer of Communications Bureau met with the then Director of Civil Service regarding this matter in January of 2002 to request a new job description. Existing titles/salaries will not provide the Department with an employee capable of carrying out the position's responsibilities.

Auditor's Comment:

Please see our response to audit finding 6.

Audit Finding (22)

We agree with suggestion (a) in that Police Officers could be replaced with civilians, however, it is unlikely to think that we can recruit employees that can perform the tasks that Police Officers are performing with limited supervision at grade eight. The savings that the auditors propose would not be realized.

We agree that the Department should (recommendation b) evaluate the feasibility of hiring Communications Technicians to perform repair work in-house.

Our estimate were based on comparing similar job postings available on-line with the Suffolk County Department of Civil Service. Most of their jobs and posting are available on-line.

Auditor's Comment:

Again, we suggest the Police Department work with the Civil Service Commission to establish an appropriate job title that could attract qualified employees to fill these positions. Although our recommendation mentions hiring at a grade 8, we concur that the position might have to be at a higher grade, however, the savings would still be significant compared to a police officer's salary.

Audit Finding (23)

We disagree. The auditors have recommended Accountant Assistants, Telecommunications Aides and Police Service Aides (9) to replace Police Communications Operators (9). The savings to be realized by this compartmentalization will be less than the associated costs of the "it's not my job culture" that this fosters and will create employees unable to understand and contribute to the primary mission of the Command.

Auditor's Comment:

We understand the department's desire to establish the ability to multi-task within the Bureau. It is not our intention to compartmentalize the work of the radio office, but rather to identify the salary and overtime savings that could be achieved and to point out that a qualified civilian such as a Police Service Aide could be taught to perform work of this nature.

Audit Finding (24)

We agree. The CAD RFP will address this.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (25)

We agree with recommendation (a). The Department has secured a six million dollar federal COPS grant for interoperability and is working with a consultant to develop an RFP for the radio system. AVL capability will be included.

Currently researching feasibility (b).

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (26)

We agree with this recommendation. However, the finding that states an off-duty Police Communications Operator assumes the duties of a Police Officer when required is incorrect.

Auditor's Comment:

Since the department agrees with our recommendation, we assume they will take the necessary action to replace the Police Officer with a PCO.

Audit Finding (27)

We agree on cross-training however, there will be no reduction in overtime.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (28)

We agree.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (29)

We agree that the issue of reporting variances should be addressed, however it is not a Desk Officer problem but may be a Department/Local Police Department reporting methodology problem and classification policy issue.

Auditor's Comment:

The department should issue protocols regarding the proper classification of incidents to assure uniformity in the Nass-Stat system.

Audit Finding (30)

We agree that the position should be civilianized however, it should be filled by a Police Communications Operator Supervisor.

Auditor's Comment:

See our response in audit finding #4. We are in concurrence that the position should be civilianized.

Audit Finding (31)

Again, we disagree. Police Service Aides are 9's, Police Communications Operators are 9's. If there is any initial limited savings it is certainly not worth the disadvantages of compartmentalizing job functions in the command by title and not having support personnel available for the overtime pool and during emergencies and shortages.

Auditor's Comment:

See our response in audit finding #4.

Audit Finding (32)

We disagree with this recommendation. Although, the Police Communications Operator Supervisors function as supervisors to the two Police Communications Operators in the office is but a small part of their supervisory role. They relate to all the Police Communications Operators in the command as supervisors in performing their duties relating to time and leave issues and also when they function in other supervisory capacities.

Auditor's Comment:

We believe that the duties relative to the time and leave function are clerical in nature and should not be performed by PCOs and PCOSs. In addition, the department has not addressed our finding that the hours worked by supervisors are not congruent to those of their subordinates.

Audit Finding (33)

We disagree. Same as response to audit finding 32.

Auditor's Comment:

See our response in audit finding #32.

Audit Finding (34)

We agree, this is already being done.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (35)

We agree that this should be reviewed.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur.

Audit Finding (36)

We agree.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur.

Audit Finding (37)

We agree with recommendation (a).

We will research recommendation b.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (38)

We will consult with the Department's Office of Labor Relations regarding implementation of this recommendation.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (39)

Unfortunately we cannot implement this recommendation because to do so would prohibit us from minimally filling the roll calls. The negotiation of a comprehensive sick leave management program for Police Communications Operators was not done in the last CSEA contract. We recommend that this be a priority in the next CSEA contract negotiation.

Auditor's Comment:

While we understand the Bureau's need to minimally fill the roll calls, in many instances these sick leave abusers were granted leave time on the same days they were working overtime. In fact, when they used their leave time on these days they had to be replaced by someone else on overtime. This created a vicious cycle that assisted the department in filling their minimal roll calls on one tour and at the same time created the necessity of overtime on the next tour.

Audit Finding (40)

The Department long ago determined that employees, because of contract requirements, are entitled to time and a half for the daylight savings time hour. We will ask the Department's Office of Labor Relations to revisit this issue.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur.

Audit Finding (41)

Signing off as is done in Administrative Offices throughout the County is not necessary for Police Communications Operators assigned to the floor because they are logged on and off the CAD system. Police Communications Operators assigned to duties other than the floor sign both on and off in the blotter.

Auditor's Comment:

Although the Police Communications Operators assigned to the floor may be logged off the CAD system when they leave for the day, there is no official record of their hours maintained.

Audit Finding (42)

(a) If we implemented the suggestion to not schedule breaks at the beginning of the tour the required number of non working break hours would be compressed into a shorter time frame (there are no end of tour breaks). The result would be fewer operators working when they are needed. This suggestion could only be implemented if we were overstaffed not understaffed.

(b) We agree that employees should not leave before the end of their scheduled shift unless on authorized leave. That is Bureau policy and it will be enforced.

Auditor's Comment:

The Bureau should not allow employees to take breaks at the beginning or end of a tour. Since the employees are requested to stay within the premises during these break times, perhaps the number of employees taking breaks at a specific time could be increased and the breaks taken at the beginning of tours could be eliminated.

Audit Finding (43)

We will ask our Legal Bureau to review this recommendation.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (44)

We agree. More Police Communications Operator Supervisors are needed.

Auditor's Comment:

The need for adequate supervisory coverage for the Case Offense Section does not necessarily translate to the need for additional supervisors. Other avenues should be researched before increasing the number of supervisors. For example, the redeployment of supervisors as the result of elimination of their use for administrative functions would result in additional supervisors being available for this section.

Audit Finding (45)

We agree and will request that Information Technology Unit explore adding a category to our overtime report.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

Audit Finding (46)

We agree. Communications and Real Estate consultants planning the new public safety center have addressed these issues.

Auditor's Comment:

We concur with the corrective action being taken by the department.

**Potential Cost Savings from Civilianization/Redeployment
Nassau County Police Department
Communications Bureau**

Section	Number of Positions Identified for Civilianization	Number of Positions Identified for Redeployment	Potential Cost Savings
Telephone Office	2	3	\$126,129
Alarm Office		4	62,815
Radio Office	3	2	192,291
Teletype Office	1		43,097
Administration Office	1	2	74,441
Time and Leave		4	70,272
Totals	7	15	\$569,045

Appendix II

**Nassau County Police Department
Communications Bureau
Summary of Potential Cost Savings**

<u>Finding #</u>	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Potential Cost Savings</u>
(2)	Institution of a flexible work tour schedule	\$ 1,200,000
(3)	Elimination of shift differential	481,187
(7) - (8)	Civilianization of the Telephone Office - 2 positions	87,129
(9)	Replace 3 PCOs with 3 Telecommunications Aides - Telephone Office	39,000
(15)	Reduction of false alarms - Alarm Office	350,000
(16)	Implementation of an automated alarm attendant - Alarm Office	256,938
(17)	Replace a PCOS with an Accounting Assistant III - Alarm Office	17,905
(18)	Replace 3 PCOs with 3 Accounting Assistant IIs - Alarm Office	44,910
(22) - (23)	Civilianization of the Radio Office - 3 positions	171,395
(24)	Replace 2 PCOs with 2 Police Service Aides - Radio Office	20,896
(27)	Civilianization of the Teletype Office - 1 position	43,097
(31)	Civilianization of the Administration Office - 1 position	53,545
(32)	Replace 2 PCOs with 2 Police Service Aides - Administration Office	20,896
(33)	Replace a PCOS with an Accounting Assistant III - Time and Leave Section	17,905
(33)	Replace a PCOS with an Accounting Assistant II - Time and Leave Section	22,427
(34)	Replace 2 PCOs with 2 Accounting Assistant IIs - Time and Leave Section	<u>29,940</u>
	Total	<u><u>\$ 2,857,170</u></u>