



The Importance of Tracking Injuries



Study Background

In order to begin to better understand injuries within law enforcement agencies, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) partnered to conduct a multi-site evaluation of line-of-duty injuries. In total, there were 18 different agencies that participated and tracked all reported officer injuries for one year. The information from each injury was collected and entered into a database and then submitted to IACP for analysis. IACP partnered with George Mason University to generate findings and results and to develop strategies for prevention.

Supervise for Safety

IACP believes that no injuries are acceptable and that promoting safety initiatives at the organizational level is imperative. Tracking injuries is one important aspect of supervising for safety. It is also important that there is adequate safety training provided to officers, and that safety regulations and practices are reinforced throughout all levels of the department with accountability structures in place. Does your agency promote a culture of safety?

Findings

Over the course of the study period, 1,295 injuries were reported. Using a 10-hour work day for the purposes of the study, it was determined that there was a total of 59,380 hours missed by injured law enforcement officers. Based on the national average entry-level salary for law enforcement officers (\$40,000), the total cost for the hours lost was \$1,211,352. Moreover, the added cost of covering the injured officers' assignments by paying replacement officers overtime (time-and-a-half), based on that same salary level, was \$1,817,028. When both factors are added together, the total cost for these 18 agencies for one year was \$3,028,380. It is worth noting that this figure represents the cost of labor alone, and does not include medical costs, which were not collected.

The study determined that multiple factors had a direct impact on the officer injuries sustained; therefore, it is important for agencies to examine these different variables and how they are relevant to the larger injury picture. By better understanding the connections between injuries and factors such as fitness, training, officer experience, etc., agencies can proactively take steps to reduce future injuries and mitigate injury severity.

Putting it into Practice

While there has been minimal research to address law enforcement risks and injuries, the IACP is focused on providing actionable findings that law enforcement organizations can use to inform prevention. By tracking injuries across agencies, trends can be identified and analyzed for use in future training or policy enforcement. IACP recommends that law enforcement agencies report and track officer injuries internally and share the specific information with the broader law enforcement community. Improved injury tracking and analysis will create a stronger culture of safety across the law enforcement community. Overall, injury tracking will promote the mission of the IACP Center for Officer Safety and Wellness, instilling a culture of safety and wellness in international policing from recruitment to retirement.

For more information on the IACP Center for Officer Safety and Wellness, please visit: <http://www.theiacp.org/officersafety>



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice



CENTER FOR
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