



Berkley Public Safety Video Update Part 4

We've talked a lot about what we do here, and how we're adjusting and changing and trying to make your department better. Talking a little bit specifically what occurred with George Floyd and the incident that occurred at Minneapolis, what sort of de-escalation and diversity awareness or unbiased trainings do members of the department currently participate in and then obviously I'm assuming you know what my next question will be: is what else is out there?

Quite honestly with what has happened recently there are vendors selling de-escalation implicit bias training. It is part of our culture, it starts at the Police Academy. I've been to fair and impartial policing at the executive level through the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and Michigan Commission Law Enforcement standards. It is at every level from the ground up. Being public safety we work 12-hour shifts, scheduling in person can be difficult. We do in-person training but we also do a lot of online training. We have a couple different platforms we use. We have a platform called Target Solutions so that is the bulk of our training. When we put out new policies we test our officers on some of the new policies, especially the important ones. I'm hoping to do more in-person training, with the pandemic a lot of the in-person training is not, and I've got some personal friends that do that training that also work for our licensing agency so I'd like to bring him in. To answer your question, we do a lot of training, you don't want to do training just to do training you want it to be valid. We also have to fact check, make sure it's valid and make sure it fits with our best practices. I have contacted the Michigan Commission Law Enforcement standards. I'd like to get the fair and impartial policing to all of our officers. It was through a grant a couple years ago, it's right when I got here, I had already been pre-registered for my formal department, so I was the only one in the entire department that was able to go, and there is no funding for that right now. I have asked if we can do that again, because I think it is very pertinent now and needed. We are looking at every option we have. We started a couple other platforms here recently that will also give us some more options for doing the training. What is next is, I would like to do some more in-person training bigger to part where I came from, and having like I said the diverse community we would have a Sikh Temple come in and do a couple hour presentation on their culture, we have a Muslim temple come in and do a presentation. That applied because we had those locations in the city, so we need to be a little more general here. Most of the diversity we deal with is our residents, businesses, and people traveling through the city. Also, we it is getting our officers to understand other points of view, which I think we do a really good job but I really hammer that because, like I said I grew up in Berkley/Huntington Woods I've lived within a couple miles my entire life, I don't have any experiences outside this area other than



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working for different cities, so we really have to be cognizant of other people's perceptions also.

It is good to know that you guys continue that and are continuing that. Specific to the Black Lives Matter movement and everything that is occurring now, are there any new training measures planned to combat any racial or inequity injustice within the department specifically? If you could talk about anything that you guys are doing on that front to address, if you were already addressing it, what are you doing now and then if there are plans to maybe increase or re-look at everything given the nature of what's happening?

We are going to continue to train and like I said there is a lot more training that is becoming available. I think some are important to be in person. I think we're able to meet here with video. I'm not a big fan of conversing through email because it doesn't do a very good job explaining people's feelings and passion. A lot of what we do is video based, so that you can get good feedback. My goal would be to bring in people. We have some options there, but our big thing is all of the supervisors met from the department, all the sergeants, lieutenants, and myself for two entire days going over some policies, but this is one of the things we talked about was really we have to understand people's perspective. It's just so important, we can not think that just from our point of view, we have to look at other points of views and depending upon the officer's life experiences we have a lot of people here that were in the military. I think that helps, because they dealt with a lot of different people, but if you grew up in Berkley and you are only in the department you work for you may not have the experiences that people in other departments or other areas deal with. That is really important, so our plan is to keep moving forward and again we have to balance it with the fire, and the EMS. We have three or four officers in pump opera training today and tomorrow on the fire side. Typically a week does not go by where we don't have somebody in training.

You kind of touched on a crucial point that I think is unique to us, regarding the fact that you guys are public safety. I would imagine that not only from a Police Officer's standpoint but as Firefighters, Paramedics, EMTs there is training that goes along with that in terms of going on a med run and dealing with somebody that is of a different color, different gender, or coming from a different experience as well.

Exactly where we're located with Southfield to the Wes, and Oak Park to the South, it is not like we do not deal with the diversity because we do. I think that goes all the same



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but I want to stress that, so and that is part of our training, that's part of our police training, part of our fire training, and part of our medical first responder training too. The big thing is communication, I think communication is huge. That's where the bulk of the issues I've seen over my career come up is when people just aren't communicating. Again I'm a firm believer in trying to do that before, you build up that communication, being as transparent as we can. We can not violate people's privacy. We can not go out there and type whatever we want into social media; we have to make sure the information is valid. We can not violate people's privacy. There are HIPPA laws, I don't want to embarrass anyone, there have been things that have been out there that were out now wrong and we do not want to embarrass anyone. It is difficult, we want to be as transparent as we can but we also do not want to invade anybody's privacy.

Certainly and that's understandable. Circling back to a good point, when you talked about new officers coming in, where they came from, those experiences influencing how they are as an officer. How do you guys include de-escalation or any type of diversity awareness training within the hiring process? You touched on a good point that some of these officers, not just from Berkley but other areas, that may be demographically similar to Berkley having those different experiences not just them, but the vice versa approach when it comes to them entering law enforcement or any type of public safety enforcement?

It is kind of a long process, and the best way to start out is, it is hard to get people to do this job. Right now it is hard to hire police officers, it is hard to hire firefighters, it is hard to hire paramedics, it is hard to hire EMTs. The pool is very thin right now, I know when I apply 1200 people tested, now if we get 10 applications that is pretty good for a department our size here. It is difficult, and we are looking for the best people for the job. We have been lucky, and we have hired some ex-military people here recently, I think that helps. There are two different interview boards that are done here initially. We have a board that includes public safety officers, where my former employee was all lieutenants and above. Here we try to (include officers) because that is who knows this job better than anybody. We have two different interviews. We also have an extensive background where we talk to everybody. It takes weeks to do our backgrounds. I have a final interview before we decide whether to do a conditional offer. One of the biggest things is a psychological evaluation which is required by our licensing agency; to be a police officer in Michigan you have to be licensed by MCOLES and that is required. We go beyond that to do a full-blown psychological evaluation so they are looking for that there also. It is kind of well-rounded and then also we really have to just watch people,



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we have to supervise our people all the time; but particularly when they are new to make sure they are following our philosophy and doing what's right. I'm a really strong believer in treating people impartially and treating everybody with respect and dignity. I lead by example there, I mean my time over my career I've arrested people for homicide, I've investigated quadruple homicides, but everybody I've ever dealt with I've really done my best to treat with dignity and respect even if what they did was horrendous. We are all human beings, I'm not any better than anybody else. We are all the same as far as I'm concerned so we have to treat each other like that.

I think that is good to hear and I know those watching will appreciate that as well. You kind of touched on a point, and I just kind of want to touch on it just slightly so you don't have to spend too much time on it. You keep mentioning that having military experience is sometimes more valuable. Can you kind of touch on that a little bit more and what you mean in regards to military experience? The only reason I bring it up is just because there is some disconnect or discourse with that.

What I mean is, that is a diverse work environment. The military is very diverse, that is where I'm going with that. We do have several officers that have been deployed, that is not a negative in my mind either because I think it gets you used to stressful situations. Where I'm going with that is you have to work with other people regardless of race, sex, or anything so that is a diverse working environment. I like people that have been working in diverse working environments and diverse situations because it is not something new to them. Thanks for bringing that up that needed some clarification.

No, I appreciate it. That is why I wanted to ask because as we have discussed even between our talks and everything like that, experiences are different, understanding of experiences are different, so I just wanted to touch on that.