



La Porte Police Department

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La Porte Police Department Is Recognized By State Agency for Best Practices

One of the cornerstones for any successful operation is the establishment of clearly structured policies, procedures and practices. Embracing this concept, the La Porte Police Department engaged in what would become a 14 month quest to seek accreditation through the Texas Law Enforcement Best Practices Recognition program. In November, 2009 the department underwent its final audit and on-site inspection by members of the Texas Police Chief's Association and achieved its goal, becoming only the twenty-third police agency in the State of Texas to obtain "Recognized Status" as a Texas Law Enforcement Best Practices agency.

The Law Enforcement Recognition Program is a voluntary process where police agencies in Texas prove their compliance with over 150 Texas Law Enforcement Best Practices. These Best Practices were carefully developed by Texas Law Enforcement professionals to assist agencies in the efficient and effective delivery of service and the protection of individual's rights. Being "Recognized", means that the agency meets or exceeds all of the identified Best Practices for Texas Law Enforcement. These Best Practices cover aspects of law enforcement operations such as use of force, protection of citizen rights, vehicle pursuits, property and evidence management, and both patrol and investigative operations. While being "Recognized" is no guarantee an agency will not make a mistake, it does ensure that the agency has studied these critical issues, developed policy and procedures to address them, and has systems in place for the identification and correction of problems.

Becoming "Recognized" is an important achievement in the field of Law Enforcement when considering the fact that our police officers regularly exercise the government's most awesome powers, such as the power to stop and question a citizen, the power to arrest, the power to seize property, and the power to use force during these processes. The Recognition Program assures both the city government and its citizens that their police department is operating in a manner reflective of the current Best Practices of Law Enforcement. Therefore, "Recognition" builds citizen confidence in their police force, improves community relations and cooperation, and leads to improved performance within the department.

An agency that has been awarded "Recognized" status has undertaken a careful internal review of its policies, procedures, equipment, facilities, and operations, and has then requested a formal outside review in order to prove their compliance with the standards. After an independent review of the department's procedures, written documents and proofs of compliance, a team of outside assessors is sent to the agency to review their operations, inspect its facilities, and interview the Department staff. Assessors report their findings to the Texas Police Chief's Association Foundation (TPCAF) Recognition Committee, which then reviews the report and votes whether or not to award "Recognized" status.

Best Practices' "Recognized" status is awarded for a four year period. During that period the agency must submit an annual report and show continued compliance with standards. In the last year of the period the agency must submit updated documentation on all Best Practices at which time another on site inspection is conducted. The TPCAF Recognition Committee must vote again to approve "Recognized" status for the next four years, based on the results of the inspection. If the agency does not submit the required

annual proofs of compliance, or there is indication received by the Committee that the agency is not in compliance during the period, the Committee may vote to remove “Recognized” status. As a final element of quality control, the TPCAF has contracted with an outside group to manage the recognition process to ensure the prevalence of both integrity and accountability.

Assistant Chief Ron Parker is the Commander of the Police Department’s Support Services Bureau and is assigned as the Program Manager for the Department’s Best Practices Program. Parker expressed well-founded delight following the review committee’s final decision. “The members of our department really rose to the occasion for the committee’s final inspection”, said Parker. “But to be honest, I’d have to say that we have a fine group of employees who have been well prepared for quite a long time. This validates our belief that we have one of the best police departments in the state”. Chief of Police Ken Adcox also stated how pleased he was with the results and extended his appreciation to Assistant Chief Parker for his role as Program Manager throughout the process. Adcox articulated how Parker’s hours of tireless and outstanding work on this project were crucial to its success. The Chief also complimented all the men and women of the La Porte Police Department for displaying high levels of dedication and professionalism, as the agency continues to focus on their goal of unsurpassed service for both residents and visitors of the city.

Presentation of the award to the La Porte Police Department will take place at the December 14th City Council meeting and the department will also be recognized at the Texas Police Chiefs Association annual conference in April of next year. For more questions regarding La Porte Police Department’s achievement as a Texas Best Practices agency, please contact Assistant Chief Ron Parker at (281) 842-3185. Or for more information on Best Practices “Recognition”, an outline of the program may be viewed on the Texas Police Chiefs Association website at <http://www.texaspolicechiefs.org>.