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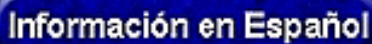
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Accreditation Saves Money

By John Nielsen and Danny O'Malley, Miami Valley Ohio Risk Management Association

It is often heard that some law enforcement agencies are not interested in achieving law enforcement accreditation™ because the cost is too high. Another frequent statement is, "Our department is just as good as their department, only we didn't have to spend all of that money." In many situations, non-accredited agencies may perform better than accredited agencies. But does accreditation really cost too much, and in general, does it really raise the standard of operation within law enforcement agencies?

The Miami Valley Risk Management Association (MVRMA) handles risk management, loss control, insurance liability, and legal defense of civil lawsuits for sixteen municipalities in Ohio. MVRMA has a membership that "pools" their moneys to self-insure, and thus has a screening process that accepts only well managed cities into the group. This also may account for the fact that over one-third of MVRMA's police departments are nationally accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Police represent the single greatest exposure in terms of insurance claims, liability, and civil litigation to the MVRMA pool, comprising about 41% of the total losses in our member cities, more than the combined total losses for Fire, EMS, Streets and Public Works, and Parks and Recreation.

Analyzed over a ten-year period of time, nationally accredited police agencies in the MVRMA pool averaged losses of \$314 per officer, per year, while non-accredited agencies in the pool averaged losses of \$543 per officer, per year. Under this formula, a typical 25-member force with CALEA accreditation should thus incur losses at about \$7,850 per year, and an identical size non-accredited agency should incur losses at about \$13,575 per year. Calculate that over the three-year accreditation period, and the accredited police department would cost \$17,175 less to operate than the non-accredited agency. Since the fee and on-site assessment cost to an agency is about \$10,000-\$12,000 for that same three-year accreditation period, the savings would roughly total \$5,000-\$7,000. The savings are substantially more for agencies undergoing reaccreditation, since the fee is only 60% of the initial cost. Savings are also substantially more for larger departments where the fixed accreditation costs are spread over a larger base.

Is accreditation worth the effort? This question entails far more than an analysis of loss history to reach a proper conclusion. MVRMA can offer that it makes good, solid financial sense in the demonstrated diminishment of costs for law suits and insurance liability.



Send mail to calea@calea.org with questions or comments about this web site or write or phone us at: 10302 Eaton Place, Suite 100, Fairfax, Virginia 22030-2215, 800-368-3757

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