



December 1993

Employee Comments Concerning PSO Assignment Length and Rotation Policies and Procedures

Justice Center, University of Alaska Anchorage

Suggested citation

UAA Justice Center. (1993). "Employee Comments Concerning PSO Assignment Length and Rotation Policies and Procedures." Report prepared for the North Slope Borough Department of Public Safety. Anchorage: Justice Center, University of Alaska Anchorage. (<https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/handle/11122/10007>).

Summary

At the request of the North Slope Borough Department of Public Safety (NSBDPS), the Justice Center conducted a survey of NSBDPS employees which elicited employee opinions about their jobs, the public, and the NSBDPS's role. Both sworn and nonsworn employees were surveyed. This brief report extracts comments made by employees to specific questions from the survey concerning Public Safety Officer (PSO) assignment lengths in rural villages and rotation policies. For each question included, the text of the question is presented, followed by employee comments. Aggregated results of the survey were reported in a conference paper presented in Reno, Nevada in 1993.

Additional information

Aggregated results of the NSBDPS Employee Survey, including results for the questions included in this report, were reported in a 1993 conference paper "Policing the Arctic: The North Slope of Alaska" by John E. Angell and Lawrence C. Trostle, available at <https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/handle/11122/10005>.

**EMPLOYEE COMMENTS CONCERNING
PSO ASSIGNMENT LENGTH AND
ROTATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Extracted from Additional Comments
on Questions
29, 35, 69, 70, 81, 87, 88

Prepared for the
North Slope Borough Department of Public Safety

Justice Center
University of Alaska Anchorage

JC# 9402

December 8, 1993

29. North Slope Borough public safety officers could do a better job if they didn't have to live as long in the community where they work.

The comments related to this statement contain opinions on both sides of the issue, and they don't reflect any consensus among personnel concerning support for reducing the length of time PSOs currently are assigned to communities where they work. The following are all comments (slightly edited to protect respondents' identity).

- It's the other way around. [PSOs should have to live longer in the community where they work.]
- Yes - one cannot socialize with community residents one day and police them the next day.
- As long as the citizens are law abiding there should be no problem.
- Three full-time years in a village is the maximum.
- If they live in the community for a number of years other residents will get to know them personally and the trust between the PSOs and the residents will increase. It would be beneficial to the village.
- A rotational work schedule would be better for the officers and the community.
- This is a hard one. Since the native community has not applied (or is not qualified) for PSO positions, hiring must be done off-slope. Weather conditions are harsh. There also isn't much active life. I think that, depending on the individual, it could be beneficial for all employees to have a rotation schedule out. It must be done with community awareness kept in mind.
- They would not develop burnout as quickly and would work with better attitude.
- Not undecided, just closest to correct. Time in community promotes trust and knowledge unfortunately it also causes burnout quickly for most.
- Living in a small village is difficult when you're also a PSO.
- This statement is true for the village officers. If the department went to a 2 week or 4 week rotation officers would stay on longer.

35. The duration of a public safety officer's assignment in one community is too short for the officer to develop the capacity to perform most effectively.

The majority of specific comments related to this questions seem either supportive of the current practices or of longer assignments.

- Like I said, if they stay for a long period of years they can connect with the villages.
- Each officer is different. Some need to stay longer, some need to leave sooner.
- Officers are being left in villages now until they are no longer effective or until they want to leave. Good idea.
- Don't know.
- Too long in a village ruins a good officer.
- Officers should be hired for a certain village and/or Barrow and stay there. It's hard to work somewhere with the knowledge that you'll be yanked out of there in a year or two.
- This [practice] has changed, as officers are being extended in their communities.
- A rotational policy for officers would increase officer longevity.
- One year or two years is just about right.
- In some cases . . . my experience was that it took just about a year to become effective.
- I disagree -- the longer an officer is in his village, the more community residents trust him -- if he's trustworthy.
- I feel the appropriate assignment time is different for different situations.

69. A NSBDPS officer should not be expected to live in the village where he or she works.

- I think rotation shifts could be beneficial to all employees who are interested.
- Implementation of such a policy is a little difficult.

70. I believe that residents of the North Slope Borough generally like the NSBDPS officers assigned to their communities.

#3 in villages, #4 in Barrow.

81. Train officers for assignment in specific communities and give them long-term, stable assignments in the communities they have been trained to serve.

- Not no, but HELL NO!

- Yes!!!

87. Provide flexible working hours and increase the public safety officers' discretion concerning the hours they work.

- We need more officers.
- As long as it is not taken advantage of.

88. Provide more time off or longer periods off duty.

- FOR ALL EMPLOYEES. The weather is harsh but I love the community.
- Yes, off the slope or at least out of the village.