Principles of Supervision Studyguide

Section 1: Managerial Functions

The formal organization exists when a group of people interact to achieve stated purposes. Law enforcement organizations are typically organized into divisions, according to specialized duties such as Patrol, Investigations, Narcotics, School Resource Officers, and Traffic Division.

A hierarchy is typical, of course, with Chiefs and Sheriffs at the top of the hierarchy. Officers report to Sergeants, who report up to Lieutenants, who report up to Captains and so on. This hierarchy is based on the concepts of authority and accountability.

Types of Authority:

*Line authority* allows managers to exercise direct control over subordinates; orders are issued and compliance is expected. This authority flows in a direct “line” down to their subordinates. Because line authority flows downward, managers do not have line authority over peers. The most common example of line authority is a patrol supervisor’s authority over the officers under his immediate command.

*Staff authority* is possessed by all managers who act in an advisory capacity to other managers. Their primary duty consists of aiding others to do a better job. These managers are specialists and sometimes referred to simply as Staff people. An example would include a community relations specialist who offers advice on policing a street demonstration to a watch commander.

*Functional authority* exists when a staff specialist is authorized by agency policy to issue binding orders. One example would be a staff manager who is in charge of payroll and issues orders specifying the procedures for authorizing overtime.

*Perceived Authority* can explain how two managers with the same rank and managerial authority differ greatly in their effectiveness. The greater the extent of a manager’s perceived authority, the better that manager can influence his subordinates and the greater his ability to exercise power over them. You might say: Your job gives you authority. Your behavior gives you respect.

One way supervisors work through their subordinates is through delegation. Delegation can be thought of as sharing your job with the people who work for you. Delegation of authority to subordinates is a principal function of all managers. It requires managers to
place trust in others to do the job as well or better than the manager would do themselves.

Delegating authority does not rid the supervisor of their responsibility for the task being performed. The subordinate is responsible and accountable for the task and so is the supervisor. Otherwise, supervisors could avoid being held responsible for difficult jobs, simply by delegating them to others.

Tasks that should not be delegated include:

1. tasks that the supervisor does not understand or does not know how to perform
2. tasks beyond the capability of the subordinate
3. tasks that involve the reward or punishment of other subordinates
4. tasks involving personnel problems
5. tasks that formulate important policy
6. tasks that are considered offensive or distasteful

Basic Steps in the Delegation Process

7. Choose the task
8. Select the subordinate
9. Give the assignment
10. Set management controls
11. Check for understanding
12. Follow up

The Span of Control is a managerial principle that emphasizes that there is a limit to the number of subordinates a supervisor can effectively manage. The more capable the supervisor, the more subordinates he can effectively supervise. The more capable the subordinate, the less supervision he needs. The simpler the task, the less the need for close supervision. Conversely, the more complex work requires more supervision.

The Chain of Command refers to the flow of authority from top to bottom. And, following the Chain of Command refers to the communication that flows up and down this channel.

Unity of command is often confused with chain of command. Chain of Command controls communication while unity of command controls subordinates. Unity of Command requires that every employee be under the direct control of only one supervisor.
Section 2: The Planning Function of Supervision

Planning is an essential function of supervision and good planners are more likely to succeed. The planning process starts with organizing tasks. The requirements include experience, knowledge of the agency, knowledge of the job, awareness of the public and advice from within and outside the unit. All planning should in some way reflect the mission of the organization.

Goals are developed to support the agency’s mission and values. Goals should be specific, measurable, realistic, and time bound.

Policies are usually thought of as general guidelines. Policies let employees know what to do, not necessarily how to do it. Policies are sometimes created to accommodate new laws or changes in agency conditions.

Procedures provide the methods for carrying out tasks, usually combining several rules.

Planning Steps:

1. Researching the need
2. Setting the goal
3. Formulating the plan
4. Initiating the action
5. Monitoring the results

Types of Plans:

Managerial plans include organizational plans, recruitment plans, personnel evaluation plans, promotional plans, and fiscal plans.

Organizational plans are plans such as a list of responsibilities for each unit.

Besides evaluating plans, they must also be updated. Sometimes, plans need to be examined to determine if certain actions are still needed and if still needed, are they still effective.

Section 3: Training

What is training? Training is defined as a process conducted by an agency to help its members do better in their present or future jobs by influencing their attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Consider how the training will benefit the officer.

Why do we need training? To improve current skills and gain new ones. With quality training, the agency also receives many benefits. First, better morale. Officers feel the agency cares enough to spend time and resources to help them improve. The second
benefit is safety. Better trained officers are usually more safety conscious. And third, well trained officers need less supervision, allowing you to concentrate on other duties. Benefits to the Officer:

The officer gets a feeling of increased security and importance to the agency because the agency is spending time and money for him to learn new skills or improvement on others. Efficiency and productivity increases, adding to his/her confidence. The officer also sees the opportunities of upward mobility such as advancement to a new assignment, recognition from the agency or even a promotion. Additional benefits of good training are self-motivation and rise in individual morale.

Benefits for the Supervisor:

The most obvious benefit, more knowledgeable subordinates. Next, extra time for you to work on other aspects of being a supervisor. Some of those things are for the department’s benefit but for you too. Having a safer workplace means less injuries and time away from work. It also means less time below the minimum required number of needed officers or having to find volunteers from other shifts to work over. With a well-trained unit, you gain more recognition for your supervisory skills, thus a higher potential for advancement.

Education and training are often viewed as long lectures with data simply dumped on the trainees with no thought to design or how people learn. It is imperative that trainers use active learning techniques that engage the officer and introduce and reinforce concepts in meaningful ways.

People learn best when they are engaged. If the training is based on a real need and the benefits are made clear to the officer, this gains the officer’s interest and buy-in.

Many instructors overuse lecture as a training method. Lecture is okay for short explanations, but it is overall a weak method for learning. The more active officers are during the training, the more they will learn.

Most officers do not learn something just by being told about it once. Develop activities that reinforce learning such as question and answer activities, discussion, or practice. Always give meaningful feedback that is helpful and motivating.

Section 4: Promotion Process

An agency’s personnel is its most important resource. Assessing and improving performance is key to the success of the agency. It is important to understand the purpose and benefits of evaluations used in this process. As supervisors, we should have a familiarity with the promotional process.
One of our primary duties as a supervisor is the development of our officers into better, more knowledgeable officers. We should be preparing them to take our place when we retire, promote higher, transfer or for any other reason that takes us away. Look for potential in your subordinates.

There are two basic promotion systems: external and internal. Most law enforcement agencies rely on externally controlled civil service systems to select first-line supervisors and most other managers.

A new approach to promotion testing is being used in Jefferson County, Alabama When counties reach a certain population, Alabama law requires the following promotional testing procedures be put into place. All officers from all agencies planning to test meet on the date of the test. In this case, any officer wanting to be promoted to Sergeant, regardless of agency, takes the same test.

Agencies that have openings for promotion are given a list of names of successful candidates. Some lists contain names from other agencies. An agency can choose to promote anyone from that list, regardless of what agency the officer works for, as long as the officer is willing to accept the salary and other benefits offered by the agency. This method is referred to as “pick of the litter.”

As law enforcement officers, we all have to possess similar generic skills. Generic skills are general in nature and apply to any agency. Interview skills are an example of generic skills.

Sometimes a question on a promotion exam can be answered by using either technical skills or generic skills. When this occurs, technical skills outweigh generic skills. A question on a promotion exam should not be answered by using generic skills if there is a technical skills answer. Technical skills have a higher priority over generic skill on promotional exams.

Testing has legal ramifications. Suppose, for example, that some candidates for a position were tested and others were not. This could have the appearance of trying to sway the testing in someone’s favor. Testing must be fair, and never discriminatory. All tests must be validated using statistical data.

A test is defined by federal guidelines as any device used as a basis for making personnel decisions. Testing can be used for selection of new hires, making assignments, and for determining promotions.

Tests that fail a higher than normal number of individuals in protected classes are considered discriminatory. Tests will not stand up to judicial review if they yield significantly different results for women and/or minorities as compared to non-protected groups.
Guidelines issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission require that anything used to aid in the selection of candidates for promotion must be validated. In simple terms, a valid test is one that accomplishes what it is supposed to accomplish. It is designed to identify those candidates who have the knowledge and abilities to most effectively perform the duties of the rank for which they are being tested.

There are different methods for establishing validity. Two major ones are criterion related validity and content validity. First, criterion related validity establishes a direct correlation between test scores and eventual job performance. It is, however, difficult to find an acceptable technique to compare test scores to actual job performance.

It is extremely important that testing be done appropriately. Imagine what might happen in your department if testing was used for promotions and the testing was determined to be invalid. Someone might file a lawsuit. Promotions would be delayed. Testing might have to be done all over again.

How are promotion tests developed? The process starts with a job analysis. Tasks are analyzed and written into job analysis statements.

After the task statements have been written, each task must be analyzed to determine what ability is needed to perform the task on the job.

Testing can be done in a variety of formats. For example, in the past, testing tended to consist primarily of knowledge-based multiple choice questions. Or, a more sophisticated test might include scenario-based testing in which the officer writes an answer to questions based on a scenario. These formats are designed to test for knowledge. The officer being tested must be able to recall or recognize the correct answer. Promotion examinations should test for knowledge and abilities.

By giving promotion tests on a regular basis, officers and departments benefit. The officers know when the next test is coming. They are encouraged to study and prepare for the tests. And there is ample time to prepare. Having officers study and prepare on a regular basis, will also help them be more informed in general.

Section 5: Performance Evaluations

Assessment of abilities and performance come in the form of employee evaluations.

Goals of Performance Evaluations:

1. Accurate measuring device
2. Get to know your subordinate
3. Plans for the future
4. Feedback tool

5. Dismiss troubled employees

Before an accurate evaluation can be completed, actual performances should be observed by the supervisor. If not observed, that should be noted on the evaluation form. Both supervisor and officer should clearly understand what dimensions are being rated and what standards are being used.

Evaluations must comply with appropriate statutes at the federal, state and local levels. They are geared to protect employees from age discrimination, civil rights discrimination and unlawful compensation practices.

There are various approaches to performance standards. Typically there is a rating system that includes above standard, below standard, and extremely poor. These levels are set by the agency. Do not confuse performance evaluations with discipline. Disciplinary actions may be included in the performance evaluation, but they are not the same.

Evaluations should be continuous. Evaluation at the time the behavior occurs is more effective. Informal day-to-day evaluations of behaviors should not be delayed or “saved up” for the six month performance evaluation. Early intervention heads off problems and gives the employee an opportunity to improve the behavior.

Sergeants are encouraged to have a checklist to evaluate officers’ on the job performance. These should be completed on each officer on a regular basis.

The model employee method bases optimal qualities on qualities exhibited by “model employees.” These are sometimes referred to as “competencies.” Officers are rated by comparison to the “model employee.”

The top to bottom method ranks the officers in order. This system can cause resentment. And what if everyone does a very good job? A very good officer might be ranked at the bottom even though their performance is very good.

The forced choice method is commonly used in many agencies. The supervisor selects statements that best describe the officer.

Keeping a running word document or some other daily or weekly form about the officer’s performance will help you write an evaluation containing facts and not impressions. When you have to rely on your memory to write an evaluation, you tend to focus on your general impressions and not through first hand observations.
The interview should be a discussion concerning the judgments that have been made about the ratee and the setting of goals with specific milestones. Preparation is very important. Select an appropriate time and place. You should not be hurried or distracted. The officer being interviewed should be not overly tired or distracted.

Start with pleasant conversation. The officer should be comfortable talking to you. Any negative feedback should have the intention of helping the officer succeed. These should be short, assertive, and to the point. Provide a copy of the report along with future actions. Provide steps, goals, and milestones. Conclude on a positive note.

Evaluations are performed by imperfect people about imperfect people, allowing a constant chance for error. The most common barrier created by supervisors is rater leniency.

The overshadowing effect occurs when the officer has done something either very good or very bad that overshadows the interview. The evaluation should be an objective review of general behavior, not focus on one outstanding event.

Another common barrier created by supervisors is the tendency to rate everyone in the middle or average. This may seems like an easy way out, but it does not help the officer improve. And will discourage above average officers.

Getting honest feedback from subordinates can be very helpful and eye opening for supervisors. Reverse evaluations allow subordinates to rate their supervisors. These are best if completed anonymously. Evaluations are turned into supervisor’s supervisor and viewed only by supervisor’s supervisor.

Creating and maintaining a good evaluation system will create useful, objective information as a means to determine assignments, salary changes, promotion, demotion, and transfers.

They help clarify and standardize expectations for officers, identify areas for improvement, and document officers’ good work.

**Section 6 Decertification**

In Arkansas, decertification is addressed by the Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training (CLEST) Regulation 1010. Download this document from http://www.clestonline.org/oles/Documents/1010.pdf. Read the document and familiarize yourself with reasons for revoking a certificate, focusing primarily on Section 3a, i-viii.