

# Investigation of Officer-Involved Shootings and Other Serious Incidents

*Officer-involved shootings often result in intense media coverage and public scrutiny. As a result, it is imperative that law enforcement agencies conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into these incidents.*

- The purpose of investigating officer-involved shootings is to determine whether the **actions of involved officers** conform to applicable law and agency rules, policies, procedures, and training.
- The procedures used in an officer-involved shooting investigation can also be applied to other **serious incidents**, such as vehicular pursuits and use of force that results in serious injury.
- Standard **incident response** protocols should be implemented in response to an officer-involved shooting, to include identification of an incident commander (IC) and establishment of a command post and inner and outer perimeters.
- A brief **public safety statement** should be taken from all officers involved in the shooting. The purpose of this statement is to obtain the information necessary to focus initial law enforcement response and direct the preliminary investigation.
- Systematic **documentation** of the scene and **evidence collection** conducted by trained personnel are crucial in officer-involved shooting investigations, which should include, but not be limited to, collecting any clothing or other items that may have been discarded or removed from subjects or officers and locating and securing any firearms and expended cartridges.
- Officers involved in a shooting may experience a variety of **traumatic reactions** that may interfere with their ability to react effectively and appropriately. All officers should receive training about potential negative psychological, emotional, and physical reactions to these traumatic situations, and investigators should be aware of the impact these reactions may have on the officers' ability to recall the incident.
- Prior to an officer-involved shooting occurring, law enforcement agencies should **consider and develop policies and procedures** related to timing of officer interviews; whether involved officers will be provided with an opportunity to watch videos of the incident prior to being interviewed; when and how the involved officers' names will be released to the public; and if and when any videos of the incident will be released to the public.
- Law enforcement agencies should strive to be **transparent** with the public regarding the procedures used to investigate officer-involved shootings. Each agency must balance the need to release timely information regarding the status of the investigation with the obligation to protect the integrity of the investigation.