



EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

REPORT TO THE EDMONTON POLICE COMMISSION

DATE: 2016 June 22

SUBJECT: Recruit Training Attrition

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That this report be received for information.

INTRODUCTION:

Recently, the EPC was presented information that showed the EPS has a higher reported attrition rate during recruit training than other comparator agencies. At the request of the EPC, this followup report will provide additional information regarding the examination of the reasons why recruits left the EPS during training. This analysis looked at this issue from two points of view: the selection process and the subsequent training process.

BACKGROUND:

The EPS has hired a total of 372 recruits from February 2013, Recruit Training Class (RTC) #127 to present (RTC #137). During that time, 36* recruits have been terminated or resigned which equates to an attrition rate of approximately 9%.

In 2015, a comprehensive examination of recruit attrition and its causes was conducted. Overall, this did not reveal any themes that were statistically significant enough to alter the EPS recruiting/selection or training process. One of the common issues identified (6 out of the 36 recruits) was the inability of the recruit to effectively communicate and/or the inability to make a decision. In reviewing their respective selection information, there was at times a correlation between a lack of assertiveness identified during the hiring process and an inability to communicate during the training process. The problem with this determination is twofold: one, this correlation was not always present (i.e. no assertiveness/communication issues were observed during the selection process but they were observed in training or vice versa); and secondly, the sample size for this particular issue is very small. It should also be noted that there is a real

* This number does not include recruits who have been injured during class resulting in them being deferred to a subsequent class. This number also includes one who resigned, was rehired and then resigned again.

possibility that other applicants demonstrated a “lack of assertiveness” but this did not turn into a negative issue in training class.

A second theme, (7 out of the 36 recruits), was the difficulty in learning ‘tactics’ (i.e. control tactics, firearms, driving). There was overlap between this issue and the above described issue regarding decision making/communication. That is to say, if the recruit had trouble making a decision at a scenario under less stressful conditions, they were unable to make a proper decision to apply appropriate tactics such as use of force.

A third category was deemed to be ‘other’ due to the varied reasons contained within this portion (11 out of 36). The issues contained within this category ranged from academic failure, lack of motivation on the part of the recruit, disciplinary issues where the recruit quit after being advised of the potential for termination and being unable to overcome anxiety/nervousness.

The last group of recruits (10 out of the 36) left due to self-selection. With respect to the recruit self-selecting out of class, the data is limited as far as specific reasons why they made the decision to resign. There were instances where the recruit indicated that they were resigning due to ‘family reasons’ or that policing ‘was not for them’. In the conclusion presented below, a more formalized voluntary exit interview process will be developed forthwith to better capture the specific rationale for a recruit self-selecting out of class.

COMMENTS/DISCUSSION:

Ideally, the EPS would have a zero percent attrition rate related to the hiring and training of recruits. Obviously, this is an unrealistic goal as it has been shown that several recruits have self-selected out of training due to a variety of factors as well as the EPS having to terminate recruits due to disciplinary problems (i.e. deceit).

The attrition data was analysed from two perspectives;

1. Are there trends that are resulting in high attrition rates?
 - a. Are there specific skills or abilities that commonly cause attrition?
 - b. Is there a common time or status in the recruit development process where attrition is seen?

2. Can we improve our hiring practice to reduce the attrition rates?
 - a. Are there learnings from the attrition analysis that can assist in the selection process?
 - b. Are there initiatives we can develop to make recruits more competitive prior to recruit training?

As was presented above, the inability to make sound decisions coupled with ineffective communication skills leads to recruits not being successful. The hiring process for the

EPS is detailed and thorough and tests various levels of communication via written work, interviews, and written and verbal psychological tests. All of this is done keeping in mind EPS Recruit Competencies (see attachment A).

Analysis with respect to at which stage of training recruit attrition is seen shows that 58% leave during the classroom phase (Block I) and 42% during their field training. No statistically significant pattern was determined in answer to this question.

With respect to examining the hiring of recruits, the EPS is always striving to improve both the recruiting and the selection of quality applicants while adhering to provincial standards. The fact that the lack of communication skills and the inability to make decisions is the leading cause of attrition will be brought to the attention of Recruit Selection Unit (RSU). This awareness should lead to a more thorough examination of how the applicant interacts throughout the recruiting process.

Several initiatives to better prepare recruits for the training process are in the discussion phase. These include increasing our partnerships with educational institutions in Edmonton, developing a stronger youth engagement/academy model at the high school level, and developing a formalized and unique approach to mentoring young adults to prepare them for recruit class.

CONCLUSION:

This attrition rate examination has shown that there are areas for immediate improvement in the hiring and training of recruits. Specifically, actionable items are:

- There needs to be an increase in communication between Recruit Selection Unit (RSU) and Recruit Training Unit (RTU). This will be accomplished by ensuring the two units meet at the start, middle and end of a recruit training class schedule. This will serve to increase the understanding of RSU on ways to ensure the best candidates are selected as well as to provide additional insight into potential issues that RTU will be facing in training the recruits.
- When a recruit resigns or is terminated, a voluntary exit interview will be conducted by their respective file manager. This will increase the understanding of why the recruit left or failed, which will in turn assist in ensuring our hiring practices are as effective as they can be.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – EPS Recruit Behavioural Competencies
Attachment 2 – Recruit Attrition Matrix

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A/ **Chief of Police:**   **Anthony (Tony) Harder**
Acting Chief of Police

*Good achievable plans to help
improve our chances
of recruiting success.*

Date: 16 JUN 21

cc:

EPS Recruit Behavioural Competencies

1. Adaptability/Decisiveness

- Ability and confidence to vary between being flexible and holding firm on a decision, depending on what the situation requires.
- Showing leadership by adjusting one's approach to the demands of a particular task by taking and maintaining a position in a self-assured manner.

2. Initiative/Perseverance

- Ability to be willing to take action to address needs without being requested to do so.
- Staying on-task to completion, particularly in the face of obstacles or other trying circumstances.

3. Interpersonal Skills

- Ability to work effectively with different people and teams of people by putting others at ease.
- Acknowledging diverse opinions, addressing relevant concerns, minimizing conflict, promoting harmony.
- Cooperating with others and working toward consensual solutions to achieve the group's objectives.

4. Organizational Skills

- Ability to identify and set priorities, plan and effectively allocate appropriate resources.
- To attend to detail so that relevant issues are addressed and result in high-quality outcomes.

5. Stress Management

- Ability to work well under pressure or opposition, while maintaining effectiveness and self control in the midst of any one or combination of stressors, including emotional strain, ambiguity, risk to self and fatigue.

6. Valuing Service and Diversity

- Ability to be sensitive to client and community needs and perceptions by providing prompt, efficient and equitable service, involving clients and community in the resolution

RECRUIT ATTRITION MATRIX

RTC #	Resignations (with Performance Issues)			Resignations (Self Selection)	Terminated	Block I	Block II Field
	Communication / Decision Making	Tactics	Other				
127	1	2	2	1		5	1
128		1		1		1	1
129			1	3		2	2
130	2		2	1	1	0	6
131		2	2	3		6	1
132	2			1		1	2
133		1	1			1	1
134	1	1	1		1	3	1
135			1			1	
136			1			1	
137							
TOTAL	6	7	11	10	2	21	15