



Vancouver Police Department

Increment Courses Audit

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarizes the findings obtained in the course of the Increment Courses Audit conducted between November and December 2008. The audit focused on increment courses and conferences attended by Constables and Sergeants between January and November 2008. The primary objective of the audit was to confirm that members comply with the VPD Increment Policy.

1.2 Overall, the approval process for increment courses appears to be reliable and rigorous. This is confirmed by a high compliance rate with the VPD Increment Policy. Regular quality assurance reviews and audits would contribute to maintain this high compliance rate.

1.3 This report is submitted for information.

2 Background and Introduction

2.1 This report summarizes the findings obtained in the course of the Increment Courses Audit. The audit was initiated by the Audit Unit and was conducted between November and December 2008.

2.2 The primary objective of the audit was to confirm that members comply with the VPD Increment Policy. The audit focused on increment courses and conferences attended by Constables and Sergeants between January and November 2008.

POLICY

2.3 According to the current VPD Increment Policy, Constables and Sergeants are eligible to receive incremental pay increases based on their enlistment date or promotion date. To qualify for the incremental pay increases, Constables and Sergeants must achieve the required seniority, complete a minimum number of approved courses and pass an exam.

2.4 Constables who have completed 10, 15 and 20 years of service are eligible to receive, respectively, 105%, 110% and 115% of the First Class Constable rate of pay. Before they can qualify for each increment, Constables must have successfully completed on their own time five approved courses per increment and must have successfully passed an examination set and administered by the Department.

2.5 Sergeants who have been promoted to the rank of Sergeant for three and six years are eligible to receive, respectively, 125% and 130% of the First Class Constable rate of pay. Before they can qualify for each increment, Sergeants must have successfully completed on their own time three approved courses per increment and must have successfully passed an examination set and administered by the Department.

2.6 The standard for increment courses is maintained by the Training Board, a joint union/management committee. In accordance with the standards set by the Training

Board, increment courses must be taken on the member's own time and must include a practical test or exam.

DOCUMENTATION

2.7 In order to receive credit for an increment course, the member who has completed the course must submit a completed VPD452 Course Notification and Police Education Fund Request form to the Training Unit. The VPD452 form must be accompanied by a course transcript indicating a passing mark and, if applying for reimbursement through the Police Education Fund, a copy of the receipt for the course. Members must confirm on the VPD452 form that they attended the course "on their own time and at their own expense".

2.8 Upon receiving the completed VPD452 form, course transcript and receipt, the Training Unit updates the Online Training Information System (OTIS), a web-based tracking system showing what increment courses were completed by each VPD member. This ensures that the member receives credit for the increment course. After the relevant information has been electronically recorded in OTIS, the VPD452 form is returned to the member for archival.

2.9 Members who become eligible and qualify for an incremental pay increase must complete and submit to the Training Unit a VPD452A Incremental Pay Application form. The form requires the member to list the courses completed for the incremental stage. The Training Unit is responsible to confirm that the increment courses have been recorded and that a passing grade has been attained in the increment exam. The form is then forwarded to the Financial Services Section for processing.

3 Scope and Methodology

3.1 Based on a risk assessment and resource constraints, the audit focused on a sample of increment courses and conferences attended by Constables and Sergeants between January and November 2008.

3.2 The Audit Unit reviewed the information recorded in OTIS by the Training Unit. OTIS was used to extract the list of courses that took place in 2008. The Audit Unit selected a sample of courses and extracted the list of attendees for each course.

3.3 The following courses were sampled:

- 2008 Counter-Terrorism and Violence Risk Assessment Course
- 2008 Homicide Conference
- 2008 Police Leadership Conference
- 2008 Western Canada Gang Conference
- Beyond Diversity: Managing Change
- Canadian Firearms Safety Course
- Ethics: Core Values and You
- Field Trainer's Course
- Judo Course
- Vice Conference

3.4 The SAP payroll system was used to confirm that the attendees who completed increment courses did so on their own time (while they were on weekly or other leave).

4 Findings

4.1 The main findings of the Audit Unit are summarized below.

MAIN FINDING: Members generally attend increment courses on their own time, in accordance with the Increment Policy.

4.2 Based on the information compiled by the Audit Unit, members generally attend increment courses on their own time, in accordance with the Increment Policy. Out of approximately 376 attendees who took an increment course, the Audit Unit found only four who attended an increment course while they were officially on duty. This corresponds to a compliance rate of approximately 99%.

22(3)(d)

4.4 Approximately 16 additional discrepancies were identified by the Audit Unit but did not turn out to be strict violations of the Increment Policy:

- Seven officers were granted unofficial lieu time off in order to attend an increment course.
- Four discrepancies were caused by clerical errors during the time entry process. Payroll Services amended the attendance records appropriately.
- Three officers did not intend to claim the increment course. When it was notified by the Audit Unit, the Training Unit immediately revised the information recorded in OTIS to reflect this.
- Two officers were scheduled to be on work-related (paid) leave while they attended an increment course. Although this is not consistent with the spirit

of the Increment Policy, there may have been some confusion around the use of work-related leave during increment courses.

SECONDARY FINDING: Overtime is sometimes offset in the form of unofficial lieu time off.

4.5 Based on the information assembled as part of the audit, sworn overtime appears to be sometimes offset in the form of unofficial lieu time. The Audit Unit found that at least seven officers were granted a total of 18 unofficial lieu days off in order to attend an increment course between January and November 2008.

4.6 Although this is not consistent with a strict interpretation of the VPD Human Resources Manual of Policies and Procedures, it may not violate the spirit of the policy since supervisors retain some flexibility and discretion in the way they manage their personnel.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Overall, the approval process for increment courses appears to be sufficiently reliable and rigorous. This is confirmed by a high compliance rate with the VPD Increment Policy. Regular quality assurance reviews and audits would contribute to maintain this high compliance rate and prevent policy violations.

5.2 The Audit Unit would like to thank all the audit stakeholders for their assistance. This audit was conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* and the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA).

5.3 This audit report is submitted for information.