



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMAND & LOGISTICS

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# HOW **REACTIVE** ARE YOUR OPERATIONS?

A PUBLIC SAFETY LOGISTICS SELF-ASSESSMENT



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# WHEN SMALL GAPS BECOME OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS



Public safety agencies depend on vehicles, firearms, radios, protective equipment, uniforms, technology and countless other resources to keep personnel equipped and operations moving.



But knowing what an agency owns isn't the same as knowing whether those resources are accounted for, available and ready.



Information may be spread across fleet, quartermaster, specialized units and other functions. Routine processes may rely on spreadsheets, paper forms, emails or employees who simply know how things work. Most days, those workarounds get the job done.



The vulnerability becomes visible when something changes. A vehicle goes out of service. An audit uncovers equipment that can't be located. An officer leaves with gear still assigned. A key employee retires and suddenly no one knows how a critical process works.



The issue isn't whether your agency can eventually find the answer. It's whether leaders have enough visibility to identify problems before they affect operations.

## HOW MUCH VISIBILITY DO YOU REALLY HAVE?

Use the quick assessment on the next page to identify potential gaps in accountability, workflow and operational readiness.

# PUBLIC SAFETY LOGISTICS

## READINESS ASSESSMENT

### Where does your agency stand?

Check every statement that describes how your agency operates today.



#### VISIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- ☐ Seeing everything assigned to one employee requires checking multiple sources.
- ☐ Fleet, quartermaster or other units maintain separate records that must be reconciled.
- ☐ Answering "Who has it?" or "Where is it?" sometimes requires asking another employee.
- ☐ Leadership cannot quickly see the status and readiness of critical assets across the agency.



#### PROCESSES AND PEOPLE

- ☐ Routine processes rely heavily on email, paper forms or spreadsheets.
- ☐ Different units handle similar processes in different ways.
- ☐ Critical processes depend on institutional knowledge rather than documented workflows.
- ☐ The absence or departure of a key employee would disrupt a support function.



#### RISK AND READINESS

- ☐ Missing or overdue assets may be discovered during audits, inspections or when needed.
- ☐ Expirations, inspections or maintenance needs require manual review.
- ☐ Staff must physically check or manually reconcile inventory to know when supplies are low.
- ☐ Reconstructing the history of a critical asset requires information from multiple sources.

### HOW MANY BOXES DID YOU CHECK?

0-3



**OPERATIONALLY  
MATURE**

4-7



**DEVELOPING**

8-12



**REACTIVE**

SEE WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS AND WHAT TO DO NEXT ON THE NEXT PAGE →

# WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS AND WHAT TO DO NEXT

## 0-3 OPERATIONALLY MATURE

Your agency has strong visibility and established processes across most critical functions. Information is readily available, responsibilities are clear and problems can generally be identified before they affect operations.

**WATCH FOR:** Complacency. Processes, personnel and operational demands change. What works well today still needs to be tested.

## 4-7 DEVELOPING

Your agency has established processes, but gaps between people, units or information sources still create unnecessary work and limit visibility.

**WATCH FOR:** Manual handoffs, duplicate work and processes that operate well within individual units but don't connect across the agency.

## 8-12 REACTIVE

Your operation depends heavily on manual processes, disconnected information or institutional knowledge. Problems may remain hidden until an audit, inspection or operational need brings them to light.

**WATCH FOR:** Problems repeatedly being discovered after the fact rather than early enough to act.

## LOOK BEYOND YOUR TOTAL SCORE

Where did you check the most boxes?

### VISIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Focus on making critical information easier to find and reducing the effort required to get a complete picture.

**TRY THIS:** Identify where critical asset information resides and how many places staff must look to determine current status.

### PROCESSES & PEOPLE

Focus on standardizing processes and reducing reliance on individuals.

**TRY THIS:** Document key workflows and ensure more than one person can complete critical tasks.

### RISK & READINESS

Focus on identifying risks earlier and improving readiness for what's next.

**TRY THIS:** Establish regular reviews for expirations, maintenance and inventory so issues can be identified earlier.

**START SMALL. FOCUS ON ONE AREA.** Improving one recurring source of friction can strengthen visibility, accountability and readiness across the operation.

# WHAT OPERATIONAL MATURITY ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

A mature operation does more than maintain an accurate inventory. It gives leaders enough visibility to understand where critical resources are, whether they are ready and what needs attention next.

That distinction matters because many of the problems surrounding an asset occur between transactions. A vehicle may be assigned, but is it spending more time out of service? A ballistic vest may be accounted for, but is it approaching replacement? An inspection may have been completed, but was the deficiency corrected? Equipment may have been issued, but was it returned when expected?

The more complete picture follows a critical asset throughout its lifecycle. Each step creates information that can help an agency understand not simply where an asset is, but its condition, history and readiness.



The challenge is what happens between those steps. When different units maintain separate records or processes depend on emails, spreadsheets and individual knowledge, employees become responsible for connecting the information themselves. The agency may still get the answer, but getting it takes time and emerging problems can be harder to see.

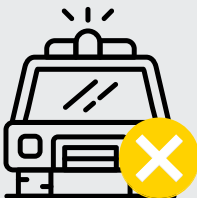
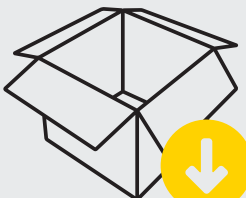
Operational maturity changes that dynamic. Instead of waiting for someone to look for a problem, leaders have enough visibility to recognize the exceptions that require attention — an overdue return, an upcoming expiration, repeated downtime or an unresolved inspection issue — while there is still time to act.

## THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION

Are you simply tracking your assets — or can you see enough of their history, condition and status to anticipate what needs attention next?

# WHAT SHOULD YOU SEE BEFORE IT BECOMES A PROBLEM?

Operational visibility becomes most valuable when it helps an agency identify exceptions early enough to act. The goal isn't to watch everything all the time. It's to recognize when something important has moved outside the expected process.

|                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>OVERDUE</b></p> <p>Equipment hasn't been returned when expected.</p> |  <p><b>EXPIRING</b></p> <p>A vest, certification or other time-sensitive requirement is approaching expiration.</p> |  <p><b>UNAVAILABLE</b></p> <p>A vehicle or other critical resource is unexpectedly out of service.</p> |  <p><b>LOW</b></p> <p>Inventory is approaching a level that could affect operations.</p> |  <p><b>UNRESOLVED</b></p> <p>An inspection, maintenance issue or other deficiency still requires action.</p> |
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## HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?

There is a significant difference between discovering an issue because a process surfaced it and discovering it because someone happened to look.

Consider the last few operational problems your agency encountered. Were they identified through routine oversight while there was still time to act? Did an employee remember to check? Did someone discover the problem only when they needed the asset? Or did an audit or inspection finally expose it?

The answer can reveal whether your agency is anticipating problems or simply becoming very good at reacting to them.

## THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION

Which problems are you repeatedly discovering after the fact that you could be identifying earlier?



# YOUR READINESS ACTION PLAN

Your assessment identified where operational friction may be hiding. Use these four exercises to test where better visibility could make the biggest difference.

## 1 FIND THE FRICTION

Review the activities that repeatedly require staff follow-up — equipment issuance and returns, inventory checks, fleet maintenance, inspections, audits, purchasing or other high-frequency processes. For one week, note where employees spend time searching for information, reconciling records, making calls or sending emails simply to move a routine process forward.

**ASK: Where are our people spending time finding information instead of acting on it?**

## 2 TEST YOUR VISIBILITY

Choose three critical assets from different parts of the agency — for example, a patrol vehicle, radio and ballistic vest. Without advance notice, determine who has each asset, where it is, whether it is operational, when it was last inspected or serviced and when it will next require attention. Record how long it takes and how many people, systems or records are involved.

**ASK: How much effort does it take us to get a reliable answer?**

## 3 TEST YOUR DEPENDENCIES

Identify a routine process that relies heavily on one employee, spreadsheet, inbox or undocumented procedure. Ask another qualified employee to explain or perform the process without assistance from the person who normally owns it. Note where the process slows down, information is difficult to locate or institutional knowledge becomes necessary.

**ASK: If the person who handles this weren't here tomorrow, could someone else keep it moving?**

## 4 LOOK BACKWARD TO SEE FORWARD

Choose two to three recent logistics problems — unexpected vehicle downtime, missing equipment, an inventory shortage, overdue inspection, audit discrepancy or expired equipment. For each one, identify when the problem actually began, when the agency discovered it and what information could have revealed it earlier.

**ASK: Which problems are we repeatedly discovering after the fact that we could identify sooner?**

## THEN MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Once you identify a problem, choose one or two measures that will show whether it improves.

**VISIBILITY** — Time required to locate or verify a critical asset

**READINESS** — Downtime, overdue items, upcoming expirations or outstanding repairs

**PROCESS** — Staff time spent reconciling records or following up

**ACCOUNTABILITY** — Discrepancies found during inventories, inspections or audits

# WHERE TECHNOLOGY FITS

Technology shouldn't be the starting point for improving logistics. The starting point is understanding where information is difficult to find, where processes break down and which problems aren't being identified early enough. Once those gaps are clear, technology can help reduce the manual work required to improve visibility and accountability.



## FROM MANUAL TRACKING TO CONNECTED INFORMATION

Digital records can make it easier to connect information that may otherwise live across spreadsheets, paper forms, inboxes and separate systems. The goal isn't simply to replace paper. It's to reduce the amount of staff effort required to reconstruct the status and history of a critical resource.



## FROM MANUAL CHECKS TO FASTER IDENTIFICATION

Barcodes and RFID can support faster inventory, issuance, return, inspection and audit processes. The operational objective is to improve accuracy while reducing the time employees spend manually locating and verifying assets.



## FROM LOOKING FOR PROBLEMS TO SEEING EXCEPTIONS

Technology can help surface conditions such as overdue returns, upcoming expirations, maintenance needs, low inventory or unresolved issues so employees don't have to rely solely on memory or periodic manual review.

## TECHNOLOGY ISN'T THE STRATEGY

Start with the operational problem. Define what your people need to know, what leaders need to see and what should trigger action. Then evaluate which technology — if any — can make that process more reliable.

**READY TO GO DEEPER? EXPLORE MORE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMAND & LOGISTICS RESOURCES.**

## ABOUT OUR SPONSOR



**COLLECTIVE DATA**

Collective Data provides asset, fleet and operational management solutions for public safety agencies. Its platform helps agencies manage equipment, vehicles, inspections, inventory and other critical resources while supporting greater visibility and accountability across their operations. For nearly 30 years, Collective Data has worked with public safety organizations to streamline workflows, reduce manual processes and improve how critical resources are managed throughout their lifecycle.

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