



# **CALEA Accreditation Program Overview**

*Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Benefits, Standards, Accreditation Process, and Commission History*



**Fort Smith Police Department  
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[www.calea.org](http://www.calea.org)**

# The History

## **Four founding associations**

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) was formed in 1979 by four major police organizations that wanted to establish standards ensuring professional business practices within the law enforcement community. The founding agencies were:

- The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- The National Sheriff's Association (NSA)
- The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

## **Purpose of the Commission**

CALEA is not mandated by any governmental group but is a voluntary process sought by the Fort Smith Police Department (FSPD) as a commitment to professional business practices.

## **FSPD and CALEA Goals**

The goals are simply to: (1) strengthen crime prevention and control capabilities; (2) formalize essential management procedures; (3) establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices; (4) improve service delivery; (5) solidify interagency cooperation and coordination; and (6) boost citizen and staff confidence in the agency.

# The Benefits

According to CALEA, agencies that are accredited experience 17 percent fewer lawsuits than non-accredited agencies. Additionally, when agencies are forced into financial payouts as a result of a lawsuit, CALEA accredited agencies pay out 33 percent less than non-accredited agencies.

## **Stronger defense against lawsuits and citizen complaints**

Accredited agencies are better able to defend against lawsuits and citizens complaints.

## **Greater accountability within the agency**

Accreditation standards give the Chief of Police a proven management system of written directives, sound training, clearly defined lines of authority, and routine reports that support decision-making and resource allocation.

## **Support from government officials**

Accreditation provides objective evidence of an agency's commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management, and service delivery.

## **Increased community advocacy**

Accreditation embodies the precepts of community oriented policing. It creates a forum in which police and citizens work together to prevent and control crime.

# **The Process**

## **Step One – Self Assessment**

In February of 1999, Chief of Police Randy Reed approached City Administrator Bill Harding and the City Board of Directors about the Fort Smith Police Department pursuing CALEA accreditation.

In April of 1999, Chief Reed signed an agreement with CALEA committing the Department to the accreditation process. The process mandates that agencies become accredited within three years of the signing of the contract.

On April 23, 1999, Chief Reed informed all members of the Police Department of the agency involvement in the accreditation process. Since the accreditation process affected all members of the Police Department, Chief Reed detailed the CALEA accreditation process, how it would affect each member and why participation in this process is something worthwhile.

The Police Department then began the process to develop its' policies and procedures in compliance with the standards set forth by CALEA.

## **Step Two – Documentation**

File folders for each of the 444 standards must contain the documentation provided by the subject matter experts. Proofs of compliance must also be shown to illustrate the methods used by the Department to comply with the directives set-forth in the CALEA standards manual.

## **Step Three – On-Site Assessment**

In April of 2003, a team of three CALEA appointed assessors came to Fort Smith to conduct an on-site assessment and to inspect the CALEA files. The assessors also toured the Department and viewed a “static display” of departmental equipment (i.e., police cars, motorcycles, and equipment, etc.).

#### **Step Four – Accreditation**

On July 12, 2003, at the summer CALEA Conference in Detroit, MI the Fort Smith Police Department was awarded its initial accreditation.

#### **Step Five – Maintaining Accreditation**

To maintain CALEA accreditation, the Police Department must maintain on-going file updates. Reaccreditation occurs every three years to ensure that agencies continue to abide by CALEA standards.

## **Statement of Vision**

The Fort Smith Police Department is recognized as a national benchmark in innovative and professional policing.

This quality is characterized by:

- Public Trust Through Partnerships,
- Uncompromised Integrity,
- Demonstrated Excellence,
- Exceptional Personnel.

#### ***For more information, please contact:***

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