



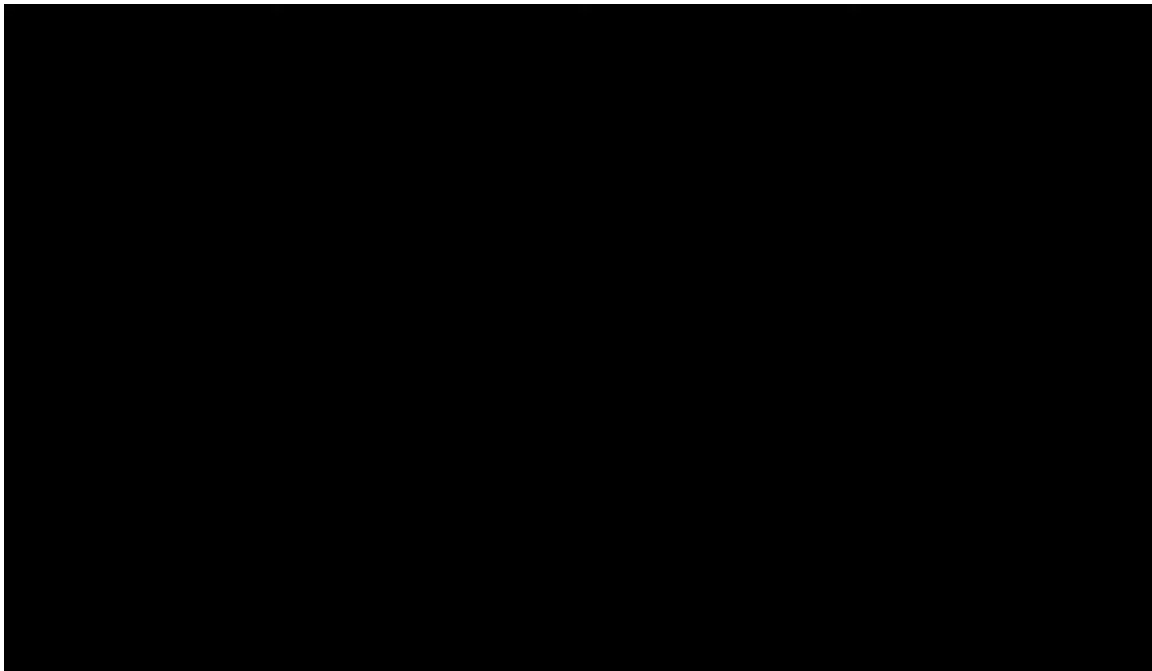
After-Action Reviews & LEO Near Miss Initiative

Creating a Culture of Learning

SAFETY AND LOSS CONTROL WORKSHOPS



LEO Near Miss Officer Safety Initiative



LEO Near Miss

- Funded by the COPS Office
- A National Near Miss Reporting System for Law Enforcement Officers
- Allows for Sharing of Lessons Learned, which become Lessons Applied
- Reminders that can be incorporated into Training and Policy to Improve Officer Safety and Reduce Injuries and Liabilities
- Creates a culture of reflection, sharing and learning



www.leonearmiss.org

Learning Objectives



- What is an AAR?
- How and when should AARs be used within your organization to create a culture of learning?
- Understand the practical applications of both informal and formal AARs
- Acknowledge the strategic learning and wellness benefits inherent to incorporating AARs into day-to-day operations
- Participate in an open discussion of an AAR Scenario

Defining After-Action Reviews



*After-action reviews are a **non-punitive, team-based** process for analyzing designated events and spotting lessons that can be applied going forward and for proactively **highlighting positive behaviors and outcomes**. The focus is on **improving agency performance**, not on placing blame with individuals. AARs can be done **informally**, like debriefing after a training scenario or a call for service. They can also be scaled up, formalized, and conducted by an outside resource, as might be appropriate after an incident of mass violence, a major protest, or other high-impact event. AARs can expose gaps in areas such as training, planning, policy, equipment, communications, and readiness; and then translate these findings into initiatives for improvement.*

Introduction to After-Action Reviews

- It is focused on learning and improvement
- A routine practice that can be conducted after any incident
- Enables those involved to discover what happened during an incident, why it happened, how to sustain strengths, and how to improve weaknesses
- A Problem-Solving Tool
- Improves Communication within an organization
- AARs are Learning Tools and Not Intended to Embarrass Anyone
- AARs can improve Officer Wellness and can address any Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) concerns
- AARs can be scaled from one-person reflection to a multi-person and multi-organization review



“What we don’t know will hurt us. What we should have known but refused to learn will destroy us.”

iMPACT[®] Field Research

**Discovering & Deploying Practices that
Reduce Officer Injuries and Prevent Critical Incidents**



The iMPACT Program Question

Why do some agencies have up to 60% fewer **incidents** than **similar agencies**?



Benchmark iMPACT Research Study

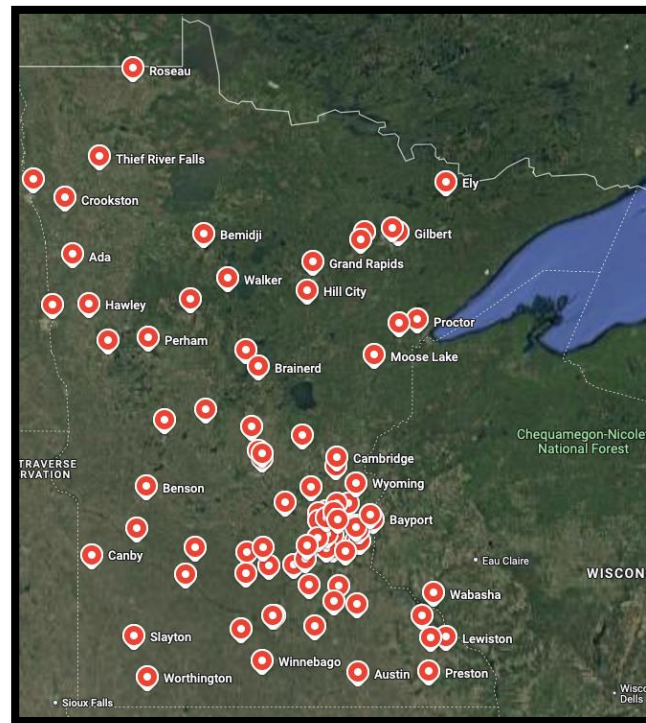


- The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) recently completed the third year of a **research study with Benchmark Analytics** to utilize predictive analysis to identify key risks facing Trust member law enforcement agencies and to provide evidence-based recommendations for approaches most likely to address these risks.
- One of the most effective evidenced-based practices identified in the study to date that improves all aspects of an organization focused on if an agency has adopted a consistent after-action review process for all types of incidents, not just for such incidents such as use of force, vehicle pursuits, officer-involved vehicle accidents, officer complaints, and similar incidents, but for all types of incidents both large and small.
- The research showed a strong correlation to a reduction in both liability claims and worker's compensation claims for those agencies that have adopted an after-action review process

Our Learning Process

iMPACT[®] Field Research

- 91 members have participated representing various sizes, communities served and geographies.
- We have catalogued 61 practices including 5 aspects of organizational health.
- 9+ evidence-based practices identified
- Established After-Action Review Process for incidents and events.

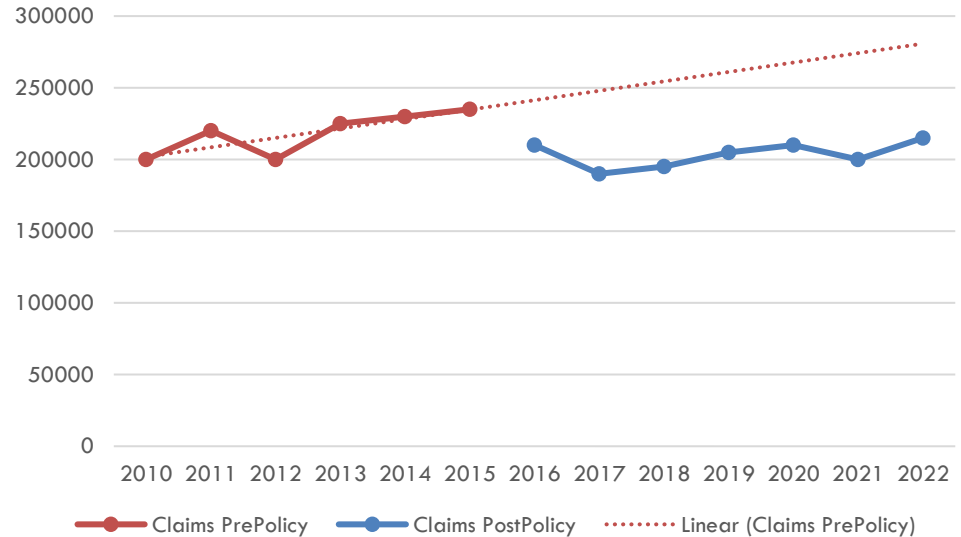


LMCIT Member Engagement

Evidence-Based Practices Research Approach

- What agencies are doing right to prevent injuries & incidents.
- Policies, programs, training and/or operations that show **strong statistical connection to reduced officer injuries and incidents** leading to liability claims.

Sample: Claims Pre- and Post-Implementation

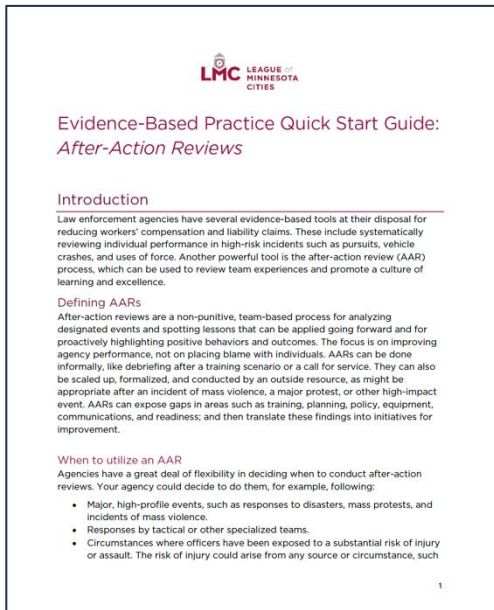


After-Action Reviews

LMCIT & Benchmark's research reveals that top performing agencies utilize After Action Reviews as part of their culture of excellence to foster learning and development. These agencies significantly reduce incidents leading to Workers Compensation and Liability claims.

Top Performing Agencies:

- Review various types of service calls, not just critical ones.
- Have a systematic review process including both proactive and reactive events.
- Incorporate learnings into a *culture of excellence* through training, recognition and constructive feedback.

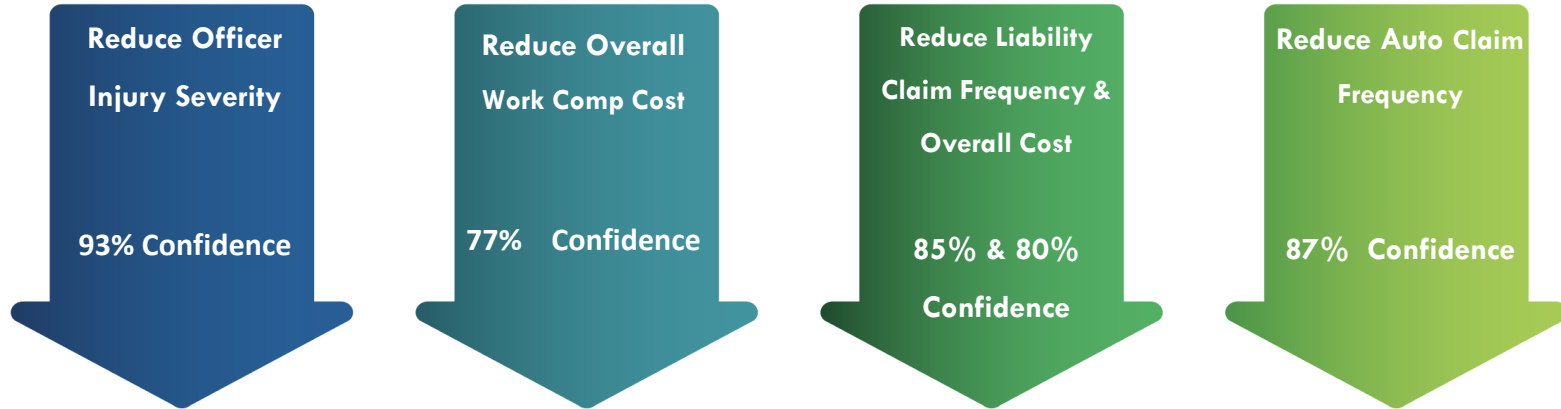


LMCIT's AAR Guide Provides Reference To Agencies Looking to Expand Their Practice

After-Action Reviews By The Numbers

LMCIT & Benchmark's iMPACT research measured the statistical connection between AARs and agency risk, as measured by Liability, Workers Compensation and Auto claims.

Agencies deploying robust AAR programs with a learning culture:



After-Action Reviews By The Numbers

LMCIT & Benchmark's iMPACT research measured the statistical connection between Body-Worn Camera AARs and agency risk, as measured by Liability, Workers Compensation and Auto claims.

Agencies incorporating BWC videos into their AAR programs, specifically to illustrate a “Job Well Done” in Training / Roll call and to produce Officer Commendations:



Case Study: iMPACT Member Agency

- iMPACT program participant in '22. Chief deployed Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) recommended by iMPACT:
 - Emergency Vehicle Operations policy ('23)
 - Mental Crisis Response policy ('23)
 - Expanded After Action Reviews by reviewing BWC for training & development. ('23)
 - Expanded wellness initiative with peer support program. ('23)
- Agency Claims Run

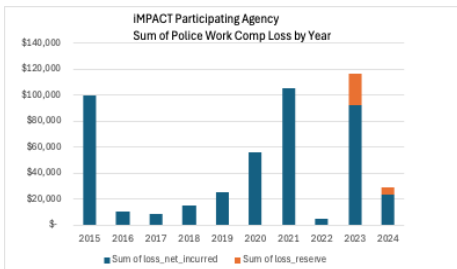


Police Chief's Perspective:

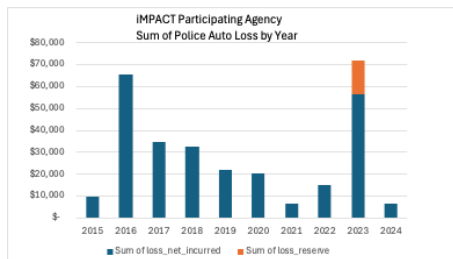
"I need to give you guys your credit. You guys putting the Evidence-Based Practices on my radar helped a ton. Having the tools and knowledge ahead of time is great."

"You guys have been a good resource for me. Thank you."

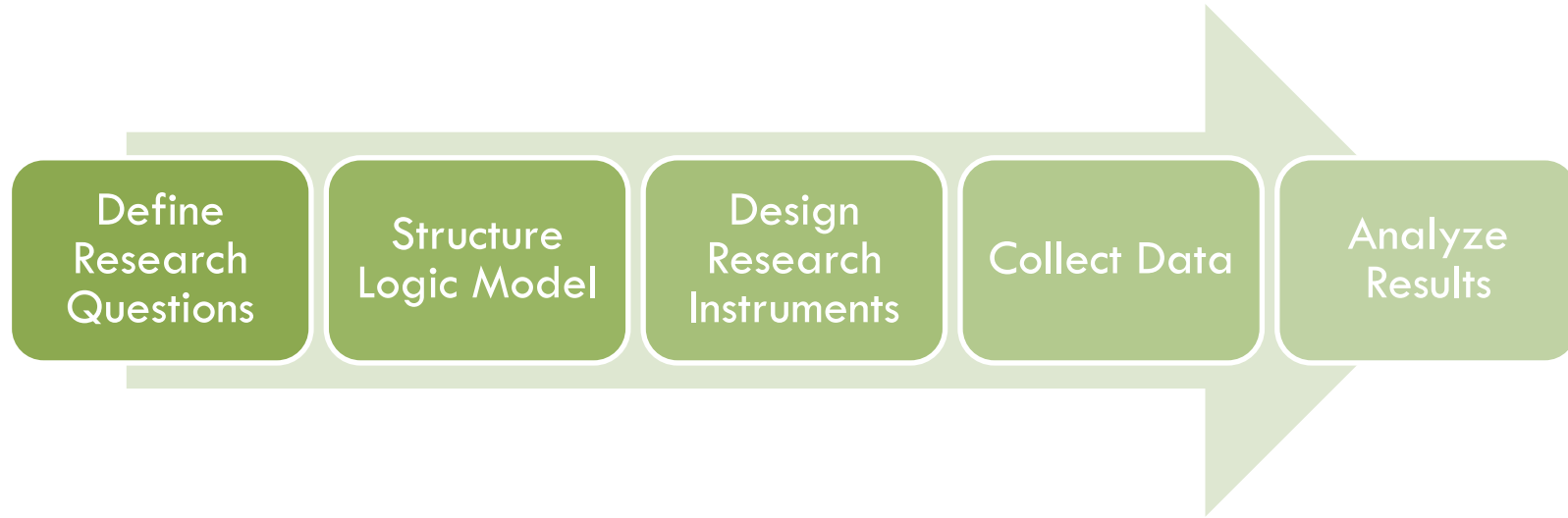
EBP Adoption



EBP Adoption



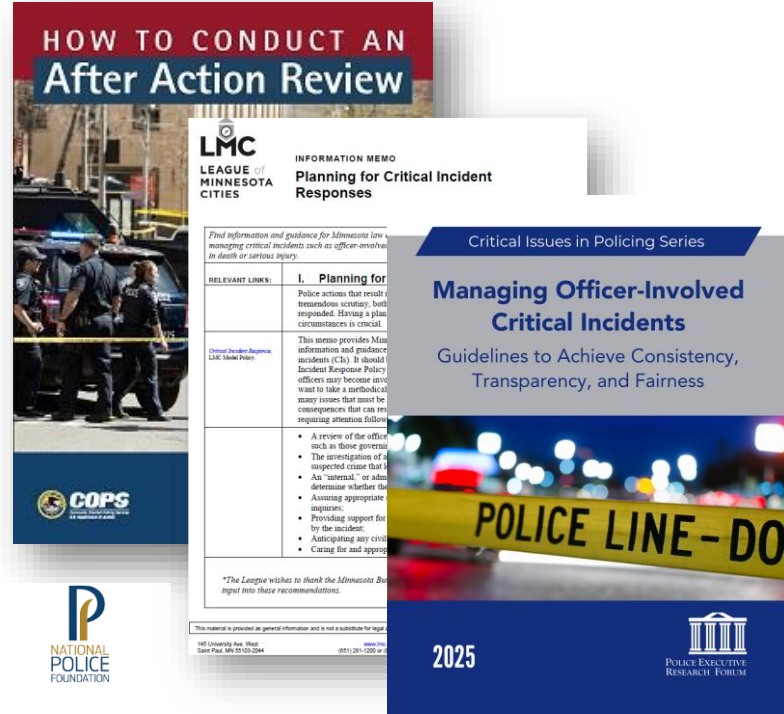
Benchmark's iMPACT Research and Strategic AAR Initiatives



Overall Strategic Question: Why do After-Action Reviews Work?

Conducting After-Action Reviews

- A 5-minute conversation to a more complex review and written report for major or critical incidents
- Common terms include reflection, hotwash, debrief, critical incident review, post-incident review, and after-action review
- What happened, what went well and why (best practices), what can be improved and how (lessons learned)
- Becomes part of your organizational culture



The AAR Process Features



- An open and honest professional discussion
- Participation by everyone on the team
- A focus on results or events that took place during an incident
- Identification of ways to sustain what went well
- Development of Recommendations by noting Best Practices and Opportunities for Improvement

Evolution of the AAR Process



- U.S. Military Leads the Way
- Private Sector Companies Adopt the Process
- Public Sector Industries Follow Suit
- Public Safety Threats Evolve

After-Action Reviews & Officer Wellness

- Policing can cause significant levels of stress
- The AAR process can assist your agency in monitoring the stress that your officers may be experiencing
- Psychological and Physiological responses are unique to each officer
- The AAR process allows departments to change their culture and practices towards officer care, which impacts the health, success, and mission of your officers and department



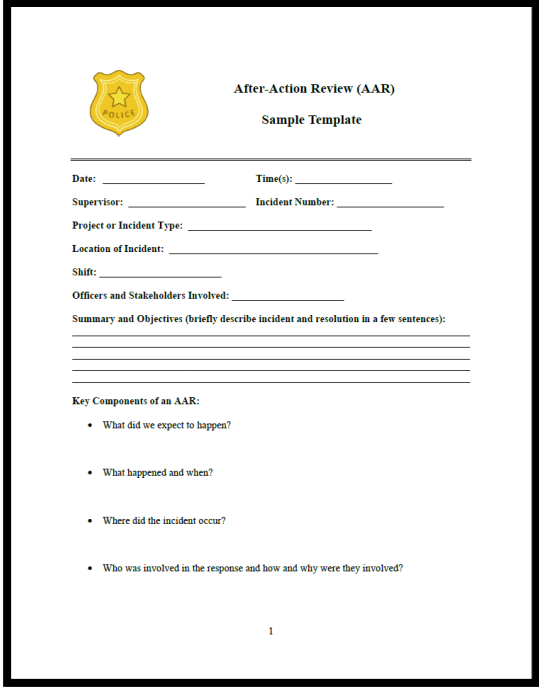
Four Pillars of an AAR



- I. What occurred?
- II. What was expected to happen?
- III. What went well and why?
- IV. What can be improved and how?

How to Complete an AAR

- Explain the “how”
- Who does the AAR?
- Informal vs. Informal?
- Internally or Externally?



The image shows a sample template for an After-Action Review (AAR) form. It features a yellow police badge icon in the top left corner. The title "After-Action Review (AAR)" is centered at the top, followed by "Sample Template". Below the title, there are several fields for information: Date, Time(s), Supervisor, Incident Number, Project or Incident Type, Location of Incident, Shift, and Officers and Stakeholders Involved. Each field is followed by a horizontal line for text entry. Below these fields, there is a section titled "Summary and Objectives (briefly describe incident and resolution in a few sentences):" followed by four horizontal lines. Another section titled "Key Components of an AAR:" is followed by a bulleted list of four questions: "What did we expect to happen?", "What happened and when?", "Where did the incident occur?", and "Who was involved in the response and how and why were they involved?". The page number "1" is centered at the bottom.

After-Action Review (AAR)
Sample Template

Date: _____ Time(s): _____
Supervisor: _____ Incident Number: _____
Project or Incident Type: _____
Location of Incident: _____
Shift: _____
Officers and Stakeholders Involved: _____

Summary and Objectives (briefly describe incident and resolution in a few sentences):

Key Components of an AAR:

- What did we expect to happen?
- What happened and when?
- Where did the incident occur?
- Who was involved in the response and how and why were they involved?

1



Informal and Formal AARs



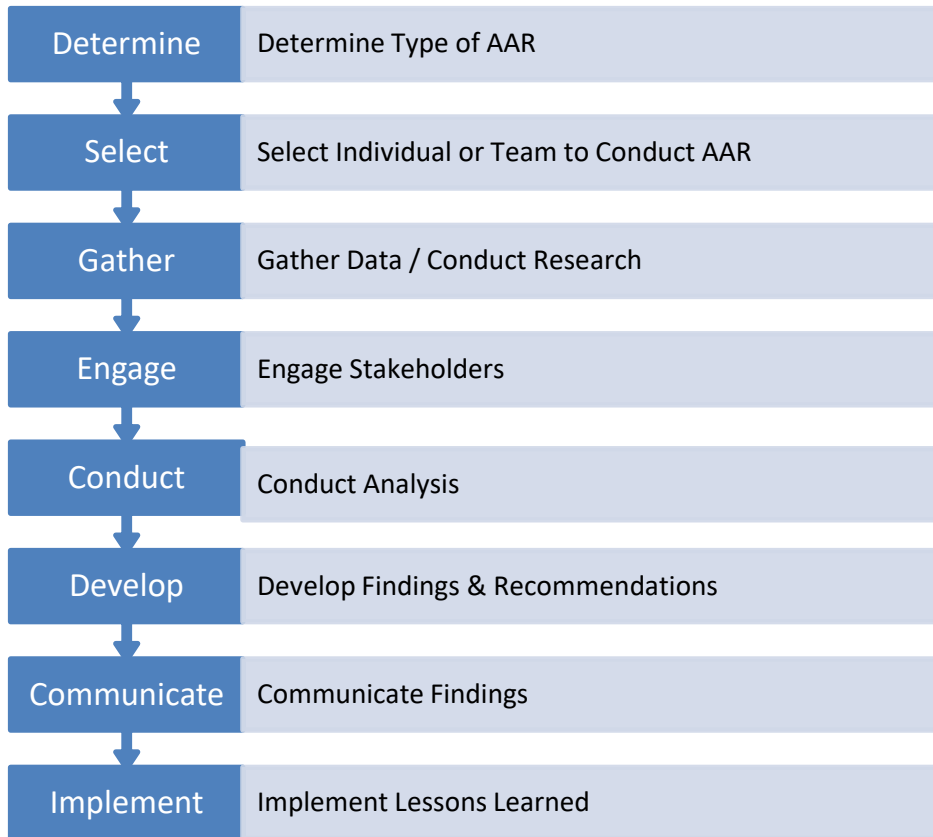
Tier One: Informal AAR

- Includes isolated, minor incidents
- Minor incidents where capturing the challenges or success for future consideration will prove beneficial
- Completed by internal chain of command, normally by first line supervisors
- Takes less time to prepare
- Informal information exchange and feedback
- Completed as needed based on leader assessment
- Held at the incident site or after a shift
- Hot wash or debriefing
- Examples could include foot pursuits, post-training exercise debriefs, serious medicals or death scenes, domestic calls, and even a false alarm call to a business or residence

Tier Two: Formal AAR

- Any major incident/event
- Events involving more than one jurisdiction or multiple state/local agency responses
- Completed by either internal or external leaders
- Takes more time to prepare
- Uses complex training aids
- Events are known beforehand
- Held where best supported
- Usually involves a written report
- In-depth review of the incident
- Examples could include an active shooter, officer-involved shooting, a critical incident, vehicle pursuits, and officer-involved traffic collisions.

Steps to Conducting a Formal AAR



HOW TO CONDUCT AN After Action Review

Appendix A. After Action Review Checklist

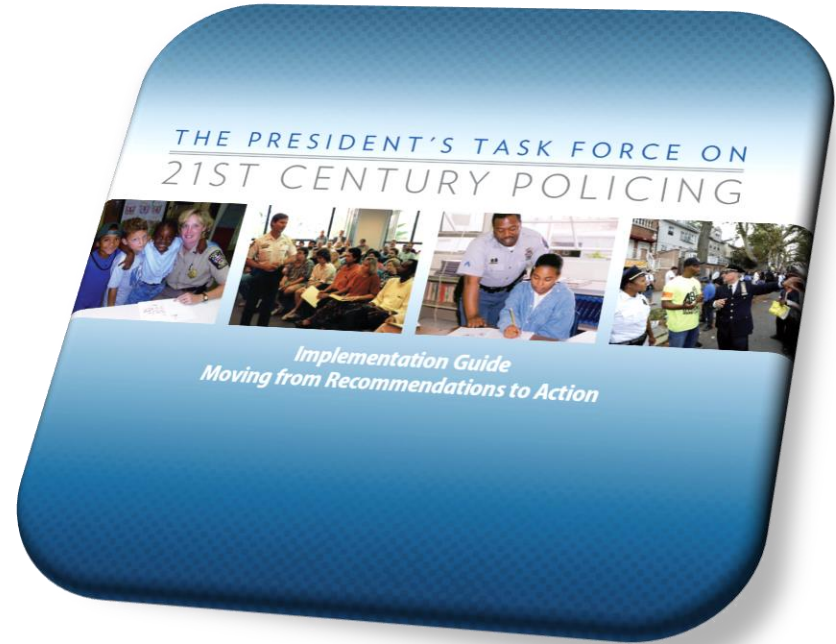
This checklist is meant to supplement the step-by-step guide to conducting an after action review (AAR). Steps listed may—and often should—occur fluidly or concurrently depending on the situation. Regardless, all must be met in any thorough AAR.

- ☐ Step 1. Determine the type(s) of AAR to conduct.
 - Determine the scale of the AAR.
 - Define the purpose and scope of the AAR.
 - Set initial objectives for the AAR.
 - Define whether the AAR will be formal or informal.
 - Discuss whether the AAR will be made public, shared only with partner or stakeholder agencies, or kept for internal use only.
 - Determine whether the AAR will be conducted internally or by an external entity.
- ☐ Step 2. Select a lead or team to conduct the AAR.
- ☐ Step 3. Conduct research on the incident, compile relevant materials, and review information.
 - Gain a foundational understanding of the incident and organization(s) involved.
 - Review similar incidents and national standards for insight into promising practices.
 - Continue research to support the AAR process.
- ☐ Step 4. Identify and engage key stakeholders.
 - Identify key stakeholders to engage.
 - Engage key stakeholders through individual interviews, focus groups, or roundtables as appropriate.
- ☐ Step 5. Conduct analysis.
- ☐ Step 6. Develop findings and recommendations or promising practices and lessons learned.
 - Develop initial findings and recommendations or promising practices and lessons learned and organize the AAR.
 - Develop recommendations that are actionable.
 - Vet the draft AAR.



Conducting the After-Action Review

- An Open and Honest Professional Discussion
- Participation by All Involved
- A Focus on Results or Events that took place During the Incident
- Identification of Ways to Sustain What Went Well
- Development of Recommendations



What AARs ARE and What They ARE NOT



ARE	ARE NOT
➤ An Honest Conversation / Reflection	➤ A Lecture or Critique
➤ A Systematic Review	➤ A 'dress down'
➤ An Opportunity for Learning & Improving Performance	➤ A disciplinary investigation
➤ An Opportunity to Identify Targets for Research & Change	➤ A 'gripping' or 'complaint' session
➤ Useful regardless of event	➤ An opportunity to blame/embarrass/judge
➤ A Way to Learn What You Didn't Know You Didn't Know	➤ An opportunity to pat each other on the back and say all went perfectly
➤ A Way to Build Team Cohesion and Confidence	➤ Check a box

AAR Quick Start Guide

QUICK START



- Introduction and Defining AARs
- When to Utilize an AAR
- When Not to Utilize an AAR
- Developing Your Own AAR Process including Recommendations and Best Practice Hints:
 - ✓ Step One – Statement of Purpose
 - ✓ Step Two – Specify the Types of AARs and Occasions for Use
 - ✓ Step Three – Develop AAR Protocols
 - ✓ Step Four – Advanced Considerations



Evidence-Based Practice Quick Start Guide: *After-Action Reviews*

Introduction

Law enforcement agencies have several evidence-based tools at their disposal for reducing workers' compensation and liability claims. These include systematically reviewing individual performance in high-risk incidents such as pursuits, vehicle crashes, and uses of force. Another powerful tool is the after-action review (AAR) process, which can be used to review team experiences and promote a culture of learning and excellence.

Defining AARs

After-action reviews are a non-punitive, team-based process for analyzing designated events and spotting lessons that can be applied going forward and for proactively highlighting positive behaviors and outcomes. The focus is on improving agency performance, not on placing blame with individuals. AARs can be done informally, like debriefing after a training scenario or a call for service. They can also be scaled up, formalized, and conducted by an outside resource, as might be appropriate after an incident of mass violence, a major protest, or other high-impact event. AARs can expose gaps in areas such as training, planning, policy, equipment, communications, and readiness; and then translate these findings into initiatives for improvement.

When to utilize an AAR

Agencies have a great deal of flexibility in deciding when to conduct after-action reviews. Your agency could decide to do them, for example, following:

- Major, high-profile events, such as responses to disasters, mass protests, and incidents of mass violence.
- Responses by tactical or other specialized teams.
- Circumstances where officers have been exposed to a substantial risk of injury or assault. The risk of injury could arise from any source or circumstance, such

1

Developing Your Own AAR Process

- ✓ Step One – Statement of Purpose
- ✓ Step Two – Specify the Types of AARs and Occasions for Use
- ✓ Step Three – Develop AAR Protocols
 - *See MN Statute Section 13.82, Subd. 25*
- ✓ Step Four – Advanced Considerations

When to Utilize an AAR

AND

When Not to Utilize an AAR

When to Utilize an AAR	When <u>Not</u> to Utilize an AAR
➤ Major or High-Profile Incidents including LEO Near Miss Incidents	➤ Criminal Investigations involving an officer is expected to follow (an AAR may be completed after the investigation)
➤ Responses by Tactical, ERU, or Other Specialized Teams, including Protests and Incidents of Mass Violence	➤ Administrative Investigations or an Internal Complaint is expected to follow (an AAR may be completed after the investigation)
➤ Circumstances where Officers and Citizens have been exposed to a substantial Risk of Injury, Exposure to Hazardous Materials, Severe Weather, or Disasters	➤ Police use of Deadly Force or Force Resulting in Serious Injuries to another person
➤ Incidents Involving Officers Injured, including Officer Assaults and Officers Being Struck by Traffic	➤ In Custody Deaths
➤ Multi-Agency Responses involving Police, Fire, and EMS, including Rescue Attempts and Similar Incidents	➤ Uses of Force that will be subject to a review or investigation under a Specific Agency Policy
➤ Major Vehicle Crashes, including Squad Accidents not expected to result in discipline	➤ Vehicle Pursuits that will be subject to a review or investigation under a Specific Agency Policy
➤ Special Interest Incidents, such as Mental Health Crisis Calls, Enforcement Details, Planned Training Events, etc.	➤ Citizen Complaints Against an Officer that will be subject to a review under a Specific Agency Policy
➤ Community Events, such as Parades, Carnivals, Concerts, etc.	➤ Incidents and Arrests that are highly expected to be the subject of civil litigation

Exercise: After Action Reviews



- ✓ “Accidental Overdose of an Officer”
- ✓ “Failure to Thoroughly Search a Subject”
- ✓ “Simple Shoplifting”
- ✓ “Handgun Missed On Multiple Pat downs”
- ✓ “Always Clear the House”
- ✓ **“Accidental Discharge of a Firearm at Shooting Range”**
- ✓ “Domestic Suspect Could Have Ambushed Officers”
- ✓ “Routine Business Check”
- ✓ “Passing Car Almost Crashes into Officers Door on Traffic Stop”
- ✓ “Officer Attempts to Deploy Spike Strips on 3-Lane Roadway”
- ✓ “Accidental Use of Live Rounds”
- ✓ “Foot Chase of Wanted Person Without Back-up”

Accidental Discharge of Firearm at Shooting Range



Accidental Discharge of Firearm at Shooting Range

Event Summary

On October 24, 2017 at approximately 1410 hours, I experienced an accidental discharge of my Glock 19 at the firearms range. My intent for being at the range was to clean the weapon. I emptied my firearm prior to entering the range but neglected to empty the magazine, and out habit, replaced the magazine back in the firearm. When I cycled the slide in preparation of removing it for cleaning, I pulled the trigger, thus causing the accidental discharge.

When the accidental discharge occurred, I was in the range and at the cleaning table. The firearm was pointed in a safe direction. The round entered the back-board of the cleaning table creating a hole in the wood, otherwise there was no further damage and no injury. The range officer was present during the event.

I have been handling firearms for 42 years, not only as a Police Officer, but an instructor and hunter. The error that I made was a violation of basic firearms safety and could have ended in injury, or worse. My complacency was my error.

Lessons Learned

- Always adhere to the rules and policies.
- Never be complacent when handling firearms, even with 42 years of experience.
- Give your full attention to the task at-hand.

**YOUR STORY CAN SAVE THE LIFE
OF A FELLOW OFFICER...**

Please share it at www.LEOnearmiss.org



Accidental Discharge of Firearm at Shooting Range



LEO NEAR MISS
LESSONS LEARNED BECOME LESSONS APPLIED

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4 Pillars of an AAR

- I. What occurred?
- II. What was expected to happen?
- III. What went well and why?
- IV. What can be improved and how?

Final Considerations



- An AAR can be a simple review conducted after any incident, large or small
- AARs are a positive habit of review that recognizes the positive work they did, identify the areas they can improve on, and are non-disciplinary and should be constructive
- AARs prove useful to determine if an officer needs additional health or psychological support when the officer(s) are having trouble managing the emotional or psychological aspects of the incident. AARs are not CISD or Critical Incident Stress Debriefings
- AARs can increase your department transparency and accountability and promote open minds to participate
- AARs should be facilitated by the supervisor on site or an uninvolved supervisor when the incident is more complex and results in a written report after a major incident
- Be Candid, Honest, and Clear About the Information; Practice Empathy
- The main outcome of any AAR process is to support and promote a culture of learning and conducting the AAR process after routine incidents makes the process habit-forming
- A Written Policy is Recommended (but not required)

AAR Summary:

“Lessons Learned Become Lessons Applied”





AAR Feedback



- “After-action reviews are aimed at improving American Policing’s response to similar critical incidents in policy, practice, organizational culture, and an increased understanding of the nature of preventable error”. *Chief Jim Bueermann, Redlands (CA)*
- **“The after-action review process allows for open feedback in a constructive way and leads us all closer to the ultimate goal of developing best practices for dealing with high-risk incidents in our changing world”.** *Chief John Mina, Orlando (FL)*
- “The more prepared you are with your planning, the more you can be prepared when a crisis comes to your front doorstep.” *Chief Daniel Linskey, Boston (MA)*
- “The after-action process provided us with an opportunity to take an honest and balanced look at what we did well and what we needed to improve, so that we could better prepare our public safety personnel, elected officials, and the community to prepare for, respond to, and resolve critical incidents.” *Chief Jeff Hadley, Kalamazoo (MI)*
- **I knew that having an after-action review would make us look at ourselves and the way we responded. We learned a tremendous amount from our after-action study about our response and the responses of other agencies. It’s our duty to continue to learn and to be honest with ourselves about the need for a smart after-action analysis after every critical incident. We owe it to ourselves, to each other, and to our communities. We always need to be learning and striving to implement the best policies, practices and training methods that will enhance our response.”**
Chief Daniel Oates, Miami Beach (FL)
- **“What is predictable is preventable”** *Dr. Robert Anda*

AAR Resources

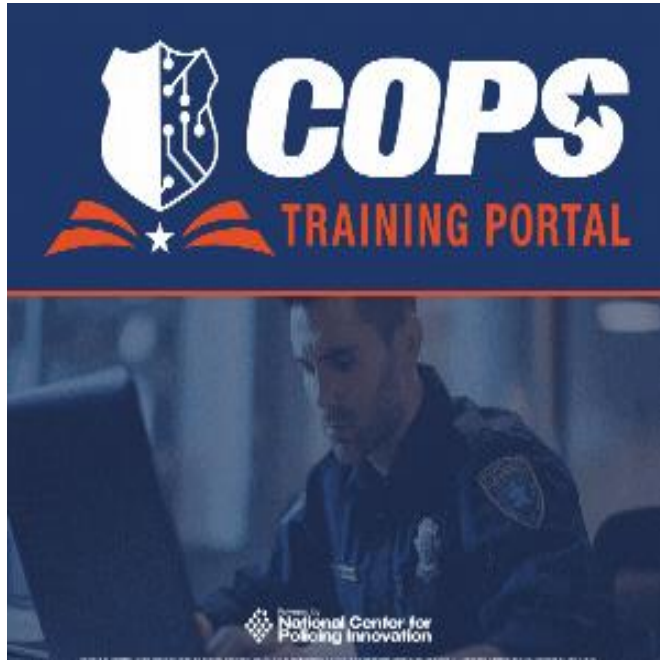
Download session materials:

lmc.org/LCWmaterials



- How to Conduct An After-Action Review (*NPA/COPS*)
- LMC After-Action Review Quick Start Guide,
- Sample AAR Worksheet for Supervisors
- Sample Policy – Near Miss Reporting
- “Empowering Member Excellence: Evidence-Based Practices for Law Enforcement” Quick Reference Guide (*Benchmark Analytics, March 2025*)
- League of MN Cities Guide and Model Policy: Planning for Critical Incident Response
- Managing Officer-Involved Critical Incidents (PERF, 2025)
- LEO Near Miss Poster

Additional Training



Questions or Comments?



Contact Information

**Tracy Stille, Public Safety Project Coordinator –
Public Safety Specialist**

League of MN Cities
(651) 215-4051 – office
(763) 232-5328 – cell

Email: tstille@lmc.org





Contact Us @ www.lmc.org

SAFETY AND LOSS CONTROL WORKSHOPS

