



Department of Employee Relations

October 27, 2017

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Mayor

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Director

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To the Honorable  
Members of the Finance and Personnel Committee  
Milwaukee Common Council  
City of Milwaukee

Re: Common Council File # 161727

In April of 2017, the Department of Employee Relations and representatives from the Department of Neighborhood Services, Public Works, Department of City Development, Assessor's Office, and the Health Department briefed members of the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding the response to the tragic death of the Special Enforcement Inspector from DNS. The report presented to the Committee summarized the needs and priorities established by the departments based on feedback from employees, employee representatives, and managers and supervisors. The table below summarized those needs and priorities.

Needs and Priorities	COMMENTS	MHD	DNS	MPL	DPW	Assessor's Office	DCD
<b>Emergency Communication System</b>	Increase ability to communicate and send alerts to employees in the field	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Training Situational Awareness and self-protection</b>	At Time of Hire Refresher Training at least annually vs Incidental training	X	X		X	X	X
<b>City Issued Vehicles or Decals for personal vehicles</b>	Employees prefer driving a city vehicle or have an effective way of identifying their vehicle as "in use for city business"	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Establish strong relationship with MPD</b>	Crime activity data sharing Training Situational Awareness Escort to critical inspections After hours MPD Support	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Map of Safe Places (MPD districts, fire houses, branch libraries, health clinics)</b>	Field employees can use to easily locate safe City locations to complete paperwork or seek protection.	X	X			X	X
<b>Uniforms and other forms of ID for employees, vehicle, equipment</b>	If employees is identified as a City worker he may not become a target	X	X		X	X	X
<b>Formal Buddy System</b>	Need more guidance as to when it is appropriate to ask for assistance	X	X		X	X	X
<b>Peer Support Resources &amp; Grief Counseling</b>	All resources and options need to be made available	X	X	X			
<b>Consistent Field Safety Policy</b>	Need a strong policy with clear lines of authority and responsibility		X		X	X	
<b>City Issued Cell Phone</b>	Employees want a fast and effective way of asking for and receiving help when necessary.		X		X	X	
<b>Flight Plan</b>	A mechanism documenting employees activities for the day and triggers a response	X	X	X		X	X

	when an employee fails to report back to base or home						
<b>Personal alarm or panic button device</b>	Employees want a fast and effective way of asking for and receiving help when necessary.	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Cameras for vehicles</b>	May deter robbery or carjacking attempts.	X	X				
<b>GPS tracking device</b>	To increase the City's ability to know where people are and respond in the case of an emergency.		X			X	

Based on this information, specific recommendations on how to improve field worker safety were presented to the Committee. This report provides a brief summary of the status of the recommendations made in April.

### 1. FIELD SAFETY POLICY

All departments with field personnel have implemented a field safety policy that includes a policy statement that articulates the department's commitment to employee safety, clear delineation and definition of roles and responsibilities for safety, documentation of mandatory safety training - at time of hire and annually, peer support resources and grief counseling resources available to employees, steps for supervisors to follow when an incident is reported by an employee including support options and referrals, and a method for gathering ongoing employee feedback pertaining to safety issues and concerns

In addition the policies include standards on how employees are expected to report, document, and respond to safety threats and hazardous situations, guidelines outlining when a "buddy system" should be used based on risk factors, a procedure for arranging for police assistance or escorts when needed based on known risks, a clear protocol authorizing employees to terminate appointment when they feel unsafe without fear of retribution, resources identifying safe places in the community (fire houses, police districts, libraries, health clinics) where field employees can seek protection in the case of emergency.

Options for supervisors to consider when addressing risks are also identified in the department specific policies. These options include: pairing up employees as necessary, securing escort from MPD when appropriate, scheduling appointments at different time, randomly or upon request checking up on employees in the field, or delaying the visit. In addition to the policy, departments have implemented "Flight Plan" protocols documenting daily activities of employees in the field.

### 2. DECALS FOR PERSONAL VEHICLES

Employees who wanted to identify their personal vehicles while performing field work have been given a decal to use on official city business. The use of such identifier has been made optional to the employee given that different employees had different preferences in relation to this specific recommendation. In addition, some departments have made safety beacons that can be mounted to the personal vehicles of employees available to employees for when they want to increase their visibility in the field.

### 3. UNIFORMS/CLOTHING ITEMS TO HELP IDENTIFY WORKERS IN THE FIELD

Safety vests and other items of clothing have been made available to employees who feel that those items may serve as a deterrent to crime.

### 4. PERSONAL ALARM DEVICES

Personal panic alarms were purchased by DER and made available to all field employees.

### 5. MOBILE PHONES

Employees who did not have a personal phone available for city business were given the option of receiving a city issued mobile phone. The City is completing an inventory of the number of field

employees who don't have a city issued cell phone. Legislation has been drafted to make this a requirement for all field employees. Such legislation has yet to be considered by the Council.

#### **6. PROTOCOLS FOR WORKING WITH MPD**

Departments have continued developing relationships with the Milwaukee Police Department to better address specific situations in the neighborhoods where employees may not feel safe. Attending neighborhood meetings and reaching out to district commanders will continue to help improve field safety awareness for employees and their supervisors. Cabinet members continue to work with senior command staff at MPD to address department specific issues.

#### **7. UTILIZATION OF CITY WATCH FOR RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Departments have increased their use of the City's City Watch platform to address or respond to emergencies. This technology will prove more effective when all field employees have access to a city issued phone.

#### **8. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINING**

The Milwaukee Police Department has completed Safety Awareness Training for all field personnel. This has been a significant commitment of resources and time for which the MPD should be commended. Situational Awareness training was, for the most part, well received by staff. DER will work with MPD to make this training available on a regular and on-going basis for new personnel.

#### **9. SHARING INCIDENT DATA BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS**

ITMD and DER have worked to address the need of departments to share information regarding field incidents. An incident tracker application was implemented in July of this year for departments to use to document and share data regarding emergency incidents in the field. The application is designed to be used by managers and supervisors to log incidents reported by field employees when such incidents do not result in an injury to the employee (an injury report/accident report should be filed in those circumstances). Information is logged by management representatives within each department when an employee working in the field reports experiencing or witnessing an incident that poses or has the potential of posing a safety threat. Such incidents may involve weapons, acts of violence or aggression, drugs or alcohol, criminal activity, theft or damage to property, and unsafe or unsanitary conditions.

Incident information entered by all departments can, via the use of the search utility, be searched by address, radius, timespan, and/or severity. Employees can search for data regarding past incidents reported for a specific address or area in connection with a job assignment. Managers and/or supervisors can use the incident tracker to assess the conditions of a particular address or area when making deployment decisions based on recent events and the severity of the incidents reported.

Information reported via the Incident Tracker application is available to all city departments for use. In addition to any protocols implemented to communicate with Council members regarding field incidents involving employees, the availability of this application will be shared with Common Council members so that they can better monitor safety concerns involving employees.

#### **10. SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT EXPERT**

DER is in the process of hiring a Safety and Risk Manager. A vacant position was redefined to bring an industry expert to provide guidance and direction to City departments on safety related matters and to better address safety needs and concerns.

#### **11. EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS**

An email account (safety1st) was established for employees to bring safety issues up to the attention of the Department of Employee Relations. Issues identified by the employees were reviewed and addressed by staff in a confidential manner.

Field Safety continues to be a priority for departments and for DER. The City's Labor Management Wellness Committee continues to be a forum for employees to address safety issues and concerns. Managers are more aware than ever about their responsibility to ensure the safety of their employees and the expectation that they will respond in a timely and sensitive manner. Employees should be aware that they are authorized to get out of a dangerous situation when confronting one in the course of their employment and that there will be no negative consequence when they do so.

Given the importance of the City's commitment to the safety of employees, I encourage this Committee to continue requesting updates as necessary and to ensure that department specific concerns are identified and addressed immediately.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Monteagudo  
Employee Relations Director