



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Greetings from your Executive Director:

Here are a few updates as we head into the holidays- ready or not!

First here is the [2024 legislative agenda](#) approved by the WASPC membership at our fall conference. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- We continue to like the idea of a state sales tax “diversion”, in which the locally approved amount would be diverted from the state, rather than added to, local sales tax revenue to support recruitment and retention. We also are mindful that adding more sales tax to already burdened jurisdictions with lower sales tax bases may exacerbate the “haves and have-nots”. The [Association of Washington Cities](#) supports increased local option sales taxes for public safety as well, but are focusing on “councilmanic” approval of increasing local sales taxes. We want to make sure that any possible legislation does not supplant existing budget funds. It is GREAT to see the cities stepping up to also support enhanced state funding for public safety, and we appreciate there is a growing coalition that agrees we need more good policing!
- The juvenile access to attorney issue is a real problem, and it results in the opposite of what advocates wanted. There are more juveniles being forced into the criminal justice system because we are missing opportunities to intervene earlier, and victims are not getting justice because of the limitations on investigations. This is somewhat of an “inside baseball” topic so [local examples are going to matter](#) as far as raising awareness and making progress on this bill.
- As we work to again improve pursuit policies and reduce the environment of emboldened criminals, we need to acknowledge and appreciate the adjustments of last session while still working to further reduce pursuits, reckless driving, retail theft and stolen cars. This past week, [a national story](#) showed that Washington State is the worst in the nation for impacts of retail theft on small businesses. A [KIRO-TV story](#) this week highlighted something we have often cited - property crime has a disproportionate impact of people with lower incomes. We will engage legislators on ways to further reduce the “no-risk” element of simply fleeing or driving away from lawful traffic stops.

Speaking of pursuits, this week I was part of a Lexipol/Police1 panel on the topic. It’s available [here](#) if you’re interested.

Many of you managing jails need more timely access to the CJTC Corrections Training. As staffing needs have grown, the wait for classes continues to be a problem, often several months long. Particularly for smaller facilities with fewer staff persons, this creates risk no matter what: risk to public safety, risk for lack of training for staff, and risk for lack of staff on duty. We, along with several of our State’s Sheriffs

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including Sheriff Dale Wagner at Adams County, have told the CJTC and Director Alexander about the necessity of getting into the training more quickly and the need for remote training. While there is no immediate and final “fix” yet, please know that the Director, Sheriff Wagner, and many others are working to provide solutions soon which may include access to some regional opportunities. We’ll keep you in the loop.

At our fall conference we had a panel on the “lay of the land” on Independent Investigative Teams (IIT’s) and the WASPC Board approved an Ad Hoc IIT/OII Committee to create a mechanism for ongoing communication and feedback on best practices and policies for this critical and changing issue. [Here](#) is the committee’s charter. WASPC Pres. Sheriff Kevin Morris has appointed Clark County Sheriff John Horch and Selah Police Chief Dan Christman as co-chairs. If you are interested in being involved, please let one of the co-chairs or I know. Many thanks to the Sheriff and Chief for stepping up.

Also at our conference, we had Washington State University Professor David Makin present information and hold focus groups on the ongoing Use of Force Data Collection project. Just to be clear, WASPC is not sponsoring or endorsing this project, but we do want to provide transparency and the best information for our members and for the project as we work through the issues. There are still many questions and concerns about the project and we appreciate Dr. Makin and his colleague, Dr. Matt Hickman of Seattle University being present to talk through and work to address some of those concerns. They sent out information requesting feedback and the breadth of data being requested along with technology issues. I asked Dr. Makin to further explore those questions and here is his response, for your information:

UOF Collection

Thank you for sharing membership questions and concerns about the Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety (WADEPS) and for the opportunity to provide additional information.

A brief summary:

- *In July 2021, [RCW 10.118](#) established the requirement for agencies to collect use-of-force data and provided funding for development of “a statewide data collection program that creates a publicly accessible database to track metrics, will help to promote openness, transparency, and accountability, [and] build stronger police-community relations.”*
- *An advisory group of law enforcement representatives and experts in policing and data developed recommendations to balance agency and public needs and privacy concerns.*
- *Definitions of use-of-force actions and/or results, and the required data points are included in Section 4 of the law.*

Burden of Minimum Reporting

Under the RCW, agencies may provide the minimum information by tallying each of the [20 required data points](#) including the number of “documented interactions between the police, including but not limited to citizen calls, unit or officer-initiated interactions, and court or Bailiff activities” up to the point of the use of force. For example, a use of force occurring today would require the agency to calculate the number of interactions for the agency from the start of the calendar year to today and provide the number of contacts.

This is likely to create a significant burden for agencies of any size. Most will have to manually identify each use-of-force event, de-identify participants, calculate the data points, and create a format that meets the RCW and public records specifications for each report.

Benefits of Technology

- *[WADEPS](#) is being designed to extract as much of the required information as possible from existing CAD data from any vendor. Automating the process will reduce the reporting burden for all agencies and provide an equitable resource for all policing organizations and communities.*
- ***Our request for [information about each agency’s technology](#) will enable us to identify the CAD vendors being used by Washington law enforcement agencies so that we can begin developing technology solutions.** We are focused on technology interfaces and will not have any contact or communications with vendors regarding agency contracts or accounts. Additional information in the survey will help us prepare and develop training to meet individual agency needs.*

Adding Context

Beyond minimizing the burden of reporting, WADEPS will provide law enforcement agencies and their communities with more than just numbers and data points.

Integrating [additional CAD data](#) that is already being collected with population data, policy standards, and the required use-of-force data will enable agencies and their constituents to better understand the context of the information as it pertains to their particular community. Data-informed decisions and evidence-based policing benefit all of Washington and its citizens.

Our team includes experts in criminal justice research, statistics, data analytics, and training development. Our research-based approach has been approved by the Institutional Review Board and meets stringent standards for maintaining privacy of collected data.

Statewide Impact

We are committed to helping improve trust and confidence in policing services across Washington state. We believe WADEPS will enable communities and agencies alike to evaluate specific areas of concern such as biased policing and excessive force and will ultimately improve the quality of policing services.

If you or any of your members have questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at wa.deps@wsu.edu.

Thank you, **David A. Makin, PhD**

We will continue to provide information and context on this project, and again be aware we just want to provide the best conduit to lead to the best outcomes to improve public trust, ensure the project does not become a political tool but rather an objective and transparent set of data that is meaningful, and to ensure our state's Sheriffs and Chiefs can best communicate with their communities.

Finally, this week, all of us at WASPC want to wish you Happy Holidays and thanks for all you do! **Stay safe, Steve**