



PS-17

Indoor firearms training facility

With the increase of suburban sprawl, the outdoor shooting range that the East Brunswick, New Jersey (46,756), police department used for training was no longer in a remote area. Because of complaints about the noise and stray rounds, the borough was forced to shut the range down. Faced with a state mandate for police officers to qualify with their firearms at least twice a year and receive instruction in the use of deadly force and police pursuits, a new firearms training facility was needed. The East Brunswick police department built its own indoor facility in an industrial area. To help cover the costs, the department rents the facility out to neighboring jurisdictions with similar needs.

Implementation notes

Leadership/staffing The firearms training facility is staffed with two police officers and one secretary. The officers are responsible for scheduling the training, purchasing equipment, and overseeing firearms qualification activities.

Timeline The outdoor firing range originally used by the police department closed in 1997. The department broke ground in 1999 and opened the new facility in 2000.

Budget/funding The borough spent \$1.5 million to purchase and renovate the building, which is on city-owned land. The state provided a \$400,000 seed grant and the remainder was funded through bonds. Most of the facility's maintenance costs are covered by rental fees.

Program description The facility is adjacent to a junkyard and an industrial park, so it does not disturb any residents. The building's solid concrete walls offer protection from stray rounds and noise. The facility now offers a live-fire range, an interactive video training system, facilities for weapons cleaning and storage, and a 50-seat classroom with state-of-the-art electronics and audiovisual equipment. The live-fire range has 12 computer-controlled firing ports and targets that can be turned for a shoot/no shoot effect. To give officers the feel of a

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moving target, a “running man” target system moves laterally across the back of the range at various speeds. The lighting can be changed to simulate daytime and nighttime conditions. Currently, all 93 officers in the East Brunswick police department go through firearms training and testing. Fifteen other agencies also use the facility.

Results The facility has reduced the amount of time devoted to training and testing for the East Brunswick and other police departments that use the facility. In the past, officers did their daytime testing, then waited until darkness to do their nighttime testing. Because the facility’s lighting can simulate daytime and nighttime conditions, officers can complete their testing in two or three hours. East Brunswick officers can also easily stop by the facility for a practice session during their normal course of duties. The department had expected to sign up several large departments that anticipate a need for the facility, but these departments continue to obtain extensions for their existing facilities.

