

Journal of Colorado Policing

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Colorado Association of
Chiefs of Police



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EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT



Journal of Colorado Policing

The Official Journal of the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police

The editorial mission statement of the *Journal of Colorado Policing* is to provide a resource of information among law enforcement professionals. The journal serves as a professional forum for the dissemination of original research, legal updates, training strategies as well as best practices and literature reviews. The journal incorporates the expertise of both practitioners and academics to achieve those goals. Promoting the publication of peer-reviewed research and providing sound advice from practitioners for law enforcement within the state of Colorado are the journal's main goals.

The editorial board of the *Journal of Colorado Policing* considers for publication the following types of articles:

Original Research: Research articles of interest to the members of the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police are welcome.

Commentaries: Short papers of a philosophical nature addressing important issues, innovative training strategies, and best practices are invited. The journal welcomes the thoughts and comments of the association's members and its other readers.

Literature and Book Reviews: The journal publishes literature and book reviews of well-documented manuscripts on pertinent topics and newly available texts within the discipline.

Legal Updates: Pertinent reviews of legal cases and articles addressing legal issues are published as well.

Letters to the Editor: Relevant letters are published, with authorship, on important topics.

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COMMENTARY

Message from the CACP President

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Chief Chris Noeller

As we continue charting the next chapter for the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), one of our most important commitments is ensuring our association delivers clear, measurable value to every member. Whether you lead a large metropolitan agency or a small mountain department, you deserve an organization that informs, supports, and connects you in ways that strengthen both your leadership and the communities you serve. Today, I am proud to announce a significant step in this direction: the relaunch of the *CACP Journal of Colorado Policing*.

For years, the journal has served as a respected platform for thoughtful discussion, policy analysis, and the sharing of innovative practices across Colorado law enforcement. But as the demands on police leaders evolved, and as the state's public safety landscape changed, the journal needed to grow as well. This reboot reflects our belief that Chiefs deserve a credible, Colorado-centric publication that speaks directly to the challenges, successes, and emerging trends shaping our work.

The CACP Journal will be more than a publication; it will be a strategic asset for our profession. Each issue will feature original research, practical leadership insights, legislative updates, case

studies from member agencies, and/or perspectives from subject-matter experts across the criminal justice system. The journal will also highlight the quiet successes happening every day inside Colorado departments, innovative programs, data-driven approaches, and community partnerships that are producing real results. Our goal is to build a publication that not only informs but also inspires.

This relaunch is aligned with our broader rebranding of the association. Over the past year, we have been intentional about strengthening our identity, modernizing our communication platforms, and presenting a unified, forward-facing vision for Colorado policing. The refreshed journal, with more accessible content and a stronger digital presence, embodies this vision. It reinforces who we are: a professional, collaborative, and future-focused association that is elevating the standards of policing statewide.

Most importantly, the journal is built for you. It is meant to serve as a resource for your command staff, officers, city leadership, and community stakeholders. It is also meant to be member driven. We will be calling on Chiefs, Sheriffs, academics, community partners, and state leaders to contribute articles, insight pieces, and commentary. Your voice, your experience, and your lessons learned are what will give this publication depth and credibility.

Reintroducing this journal is a statement of where we are headed as an association, toward

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

greater transparency, more professional development, more leadership support, and greater value for every CACP member. I look forward to the conversations it will spark and the innovation it will help spread across Colorado.

Thank you for your leadership, your partnership, and your dedication to policing in our great state.

Original Research

Drug Recognition Experts and Destigmatized Cannabis Use: Evolving Law Enforcement Attitudes and Internal Policies in a Post-Prohibition Era

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The rapid rate of expansion of cannabis legalization, both medically and recreationally, across the United States has introduced substantial operational and policy challenges for local law enforcement agencies. As more states legalize recreational use, and the steady march continues toward Federal rescheduling (Collins et al., 2024), the need for effective and accurate ways of detecting cannabis impairment, particularly in the area of traffic safety, has grown substantially (Preuss et al., 2021). Federal rescheduling also has major policy, personnel, and human resources implications regarding the lawful employee use of cannabis for sworn personnel. In this article, I examine two issues that police executives and command staff officers should immediately begin to prepare for: Equipping agencies to enforce cannabis-related DUI offenses properly and more efficiently, as well as preparing for the eventuality of regulating off-duty cannabis use for active police officers.

Background

In 2023, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recommended to the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) that marijuana, also known as cannabis, be rescheduled from Schedule I to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Schedule I drugs are substances considered to have a high probability of being habit-forming as well as having no acceptable medical use. Schedule III drugs have a low potential for dependence and are accepted as having medical efficacy under the proper supervision of a physician. In May 2024, the DEA made a formal proposal to transfer cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III (Collins et al., 2024). The DEA issued the standard Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to investigate

rescheduling, opening the proposed change to public comments. In July 2024, the public comment period officially closed, with over 42,000 public comments submitted. This was the largest amount of public feedback ever received during an open commentary period for a DEA related action.

A review of the comments shows heavy support for a down-classification of cannabis to Schedule III, while other comments are in support of the complete descheduling of cannabis (like alcohol). A minority of commentators made references to cannabis being a gateway drug and that such a law change would be an impetus to future societal harm. The DEA initially scheduled a public hearing for January 2025 as the next step in the administrative process. That hearing has been indefinitely stayed

pending the resolution of several legal challenges currently under appeal. As a result, the timeline for issuing a final scheduling determination remains uncertain.

Critics of the proposed change openly ask: Why move to reclassify the scheduling of cannabis now? What conditions now exist to answer this question that were not in place previously? HHS conducted a review of whether medical use of cannabis has real efficacy and if it is now considered accepted by the medical community for current accepted medical use, a standard that it had previously failed to meet under previous reviews by HHS. The recent review was accomplished by revisiting the two-pronged test that evaluates whether a drug has widespread medical use and is supported by credible scientific evidence. The clearest example offered during the review was the efficacy of relief provided by cannabis use in patients being treated with chemotherapy, particularly in dealing with nausea and vomiting (Hill & Puli, 2025). Cannabis has since been extended to treat a variety of ailments, including psychiatric issues such as depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and anxiety (Hill & Puli, 2025). There is now a professional consensus in the medical community that cannabis has real medical efficacy, and the range of use has vast potential. Ironically, the prohibitive scheduling that cannabis currently falls under precludes cannabis from the extensive research that would be possible under the new schedule classification. Therefore, not only is there an argument to be made for the medical efficacy of cannabis, but there is also real long-term research potential.

Expansion of Cannabis Legality

In the United States, there are currently 39 states in which cannabis is legal for medical use and 24

states that allow recreational use. There is a medical and recreational law overlap, leaving Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, South Carolina, and Wyoming as the only five states without any legal use of cannabis (Disa Global Solutions, 2025). Just 10 years ago, in 2015, only 23 states had laws on the books that allowed for cannabis use in some capacity; the permissive stance toward cannabis use has doubled in that time. The rapid and widespread expansion of cannabis legalization and decriminalization now requires the law enforcement community to take a serious look at training police officers in recognizing cannabis impairment symptomology (Hartman, Richman, Hayes & Huestis, 2016), as well as employing new standards of protocol and training to obtain convictions (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2024).

Cannabis Consumption

Recent studies have shown that cannabis consumption patterns are more akin to tobacco use, as opposed to the way alcohol is traditionally used (Kerr et al., 2023). Additionally, by looking at the quantity of cannabis consumption over a nearly decade-long period and comparing that with alcohol consumption during the same interval, some general observations of consumption among various age groups can be extrapolated. According to Kerr et al. (2023), the intricacies of cannabis consumption can only be evaluated for public health impact by conducting long-term studies. Ironically, one of the primary obstacles to such long-term studies has been the classification of cannabis as a Schedule I narcotic, making it extremely difficult for researchers to access cannabis for study in a controlled setting (Mead, 2019).

By looking at the three groups traditionally considered to be at the most risk from drugs and alcohol, determinations can be made regarding what

recent cannabis consumption patterns mean in the context of a multi-decade review. The three age groups at most risk are adolescents (12 to 17 years old), young adults (18 to 25 years old), and adults (26 years old and older). The results of the recent study by Kerr and his associates are telling. Adolescents had an almost 50 percent decrease in alcohol use from 2003 to 2021, and a reduction in cannabis use from 8.2 to 7.1 percent (Kerr et al., 2023). That finding is noteworthy, as a period that was witness to significant progress in cannabis legalization also experienced a decrease in cannabis consumption among adolescents. The results for young adults were also substantial. There has been a gradual decline in alcohol consumption among this age group, from a level of 60.3 percent in 2003 to 54.3 percent in 2021 (Kerr et al., 2023). However, this age group experienced the most significant increase in cannabis use, rising from 17.3 percent in 2013 to 35.4 percent in 2021 (Kerr et al., 2023). That would suggest that cannabis has usurped alcohol as the preferred recreational substance for young adults. For adults over the age of 25, alcohol consumption remained essentially the same, with cannabis use increasing from 4 percent in 2003 to 13.1 percent in 2021 (Kerr et al., 2023). The fact that cannabis consumption is rising while alcohol consumption has remained essentially the same leaves some significant enforcement challenges for the street-level police officer.

Enforcement Challenges

Standardized Field Sobriety Tests

The Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFSTs) have evolved. They are standardized by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and taught in every state. SFSTs are geared toward identifying impairment based on findings from

studies that only evaluated impairment by alcohol. SFSTs were not designed to deal with the symptomology and behavior typically presented by substances other than central nervous system depressants, such as alcohol. For example, horizontal gaze nystagmus, which is an involuntary jerking of the eyes as they follow a stimulus laterally from side to side, would not be present if the offender had consumed a central nervous system stimulant, narcotic analgesic, hallucinogen, or cannabis (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2024).

The earliest studies concerning alcohol impairment by motorists were conducted in the 1970s by the Southern California Research Institute (SCRI). At the time, alcohol impairment was a significant problem, and widespread drug use had not yet been associated with driving. The earliest tests were conducted between 1975 and 1977 and were designed to accurately predict Blood Alcohol Concentrations (BAC) at or above 0.10 percent (the current legal threshold is 0.08 percent BAC). During that trial period, more than a dozen types of sobriety tests were studied. Three tests: horizontal gaze nystagmus, walk-and-turn, and one-leg stand, emerged out of that study as the standard tests in the SFST battery, and are the tests currently being used by the majority of the country. These tests are now considered scientifically validated and have withstood several legal challenges.

NHTSA officially adopted the SFSTs as the national standard for driving under the influence (DUI) testing in 1981 (Stuster et al., 2011). The International Association of Chiefs of Police has since collaborated with NHTSA to standardize training protocols for DUI instructors at different levels (Burns & Moskowitz, 1977; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2024; Tharp, Burns, & Moskowitz, 1981). The

conversation about the relationship between cannabis ingestion and impairment must be addressed head-on if common-sense solutions are to be devised in anticipation of full future cannabis legalization.

A major critique of cannabis legalization is the specter of increases in motor vehicle crashes. In one study, the crash severity data (2009 to 2019) of states with regulated cannabis were analyzed and compared to data collected during the period before cannabis was legalized. Farmer, Monfort, and Woods's (2022) findings varied from state to state, but the overall trend found in states where cannabis had been legalized showed an increase in injury crashes by 6.5 percent and an increase in fatal crashes by 2.3 percent. The subsequent beginning of retail cannabis sales in the same states studied showed no changes in crash patterns (Farmer, Monfort, & Woods, 2022). Additionally, some states, such as California, saw opposite results. The range of occurrence for crashes involving injury post-legalization stretched from a 7 percent decrease over the years before cannabis legalization to an 18 percent increase. The effects on fatal crashes ranged from a 10 percent reduction to a 4 percent increase (Farmer, Monfort, & Woods, 2022). The researchers noted the need for continued research in this area because the results varied so widely. The data do reflect an urgent need for police officers to have the proper training to identify cannabis-related impairment in drivers (Preuss et al., 2021).

The Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Program

The most comprehensive training currently available to police officers in drug impairment recognition is the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program. The DRE program was born out of similar circumstances to those of SFSTs, the rapid and widespread proliferation of cannabis consumption. In

the early 1970s, the Los Angeles Police Department identified a trend where a substantial number of drivers, who were driving while seemingly impaired, were testing below the legal limits for breath alcohol content. The officers quickly realized they were observing signs of drug impairment, but had no formal way to assess, confirm, or quantify them.

At the time the DRE program was initiated, crack cocaine and phencyclidine (PCP) were being used at an alarming rate, with phencyclidine use being statistically more common than cannabis use in Los Angeles during the period of several studies. Police officers assigned to the Los Angeles Police Department's Traffic Unit, particularly Dick Studdard and Len Leeds, took the lead in developing a new systematic process to observe physiological signs of drug impairment, grounded in legitimate medical and pharmacological research and practices. Those data were then used to make a sound determination as to what drug or drugs the offender was under the influence of, based on bona fide, science-backed data. The success of their program's methodology quickly attracted the attention of the NHTSA. Through a collaborative effort, both groups developed a standardized DRE protocol, which is still in use today. DREs account for less than one-tenth of one percent of active law enforcement officers, primarily due to the complex selection process to enter the program and the high training standards required to maintain certification (Hartman et al., 2016; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2025).

The importance of DREs as an asset in identifying drug consumption is going to play an increasingly vital role in policing. Not only has there been an increase in cannabis consumption, but other drugs like fentanyl have symptomologies that are separate from what an officer would be trained to

identify as alcohol consumption. Additionally, officers without drug impairment training may be more susceptible to misidentifying drug impairment as a medical condition (Hartman et al., 2016), failing to hold the perpetrator accountable, as no arrest is made and the would-be offender is handed over to medical staff.

Conversely, DREs are also vital in identifying cases where an officer with minimal DUI training may have arrested an individual for suspected impairment, when in fact the clues of impairment witnessed by the officer were caused by a medical condition, like a stroke or diabetic ketoacidosis. For example, an officer may observe a suspected DUI offender and notice that the driver's pupils are different sizes. Without the proper training, the officer may mistake that condition for some symptomology related to drugs or alcohol. DREs would immediately recognize this as a possible medical emergency and make appropriate inquiries into the arrestee's medical history. This is just one example that highlights the importance of how the DRE program extends beyond just helping to convict DUI offenders; it acts as a safeguard to protect arrestees who may be experiencing a medical episode with symptoms analogous to those who have ingested drugs or alcohol.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (2025), cannabis is currently the most consumed federally illicit drug in the United States, with a reported 19 percent of the population having used it at least once since 2021. The rapid proliferation of cannabis, combined with the lack of standardized training in cannabis impairment, has created an urgent gap that needs to be addressed by law enforcement leaders. A review of police academy training protocols across all 50 states found essentially no mandated cannabis DUI training in the curricula.

The current standard is to teach the NHTSA-backed SFSTs, which are the proper validated training for officers to identify offenders under the influence of alcohol or other central nervous system depressants. However, there is a gap in the training, as that leaves six remaining drug categories available (including cannabis) that police recruits are not routinely trained on. The current curriculum provides an average of 24 hours of SFST training, based on the NHTSA curriculum, which does not discuss the effects of narcotics on the body in any significant detail (Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2021).

While cannabis has been shown to have marked medicinal effects for certain conditions (Hill & Puli, 2025), it is still an impairing substance, and the increase in overdoses, motor vehicle crashes, and cases of cannabis use disorder cannot be ignored (Centers for Disease Control, 2025; Farmer et al., 2022).

Overcoming DRE Training Burdens

Police leadership must proactively equip officers with the proper assets to combat DUI offenses in a post-cannabis prohibition world. DRE programs have grant-funded spots in their schools; therefore, sending an officer to this training may not be an overt financial burden. In the weeks the officer is away for DRE training, smaller agencies may need to pay overtime to backfill the officer's absence; however, the benefit of having a DRE on staff at an agency pays significant dividends, providing a meaningful return on investment. One middle alternative is the Advanced Roadside Impairment Driver Education course. This course is bridging the gap between NHTSA's SFST course and the DRE program by training officers on the actual classifications of drugs and the individual symptomologies expected to be present with each type of narcotic ingestion.

Off-Duty Use in a Post-Cannabis Prohibition Era

As federal cannabis rescheduling and eventual legalization continue to gain momentum, a growing and urgent question emerges: how will agencies navigate sworn law enforcement officers being permitted to use cannabis during off-duty hours once the law changes? This issue touches multiple layers of concern, including public safety, fitness for duty, legal liability, evolving drug detection science, officer recruitment and retention, and community trust. While rescheduling cannabis to Schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act would eliminate the current federal prohibition, the ripple effects on personnel policy are complex and far-reaching (Collins et al., 2024).

One of the most immediate implications for law enforcement agencies involves the development of evidence-based fitness-for-duty policies. Unlike alcohol, which clears the system in a matter of hours and can be detected and measured with real-time breathalyzer tests, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) can remain in the body for days or even weeks. THC is stored in fat cells and does not directly correlate with impairment once detected in urine or blood (Preuss et al., 2021). Therefore, any agency considering permitting off-duty use must avoid relying solely on traditional drug tests, which may detect lawful use that occurred well outside the window of impairment (Hartman et al., 2016). The result is a need to shift toward behavioral or functional performance testing and to expand the use of DREs to make impairment determinations based on physiological indicators, not just biological samples (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2024).

The argument that cannabis detection in the body is not as rapid or easily translatable as a

breathalyzer test is not a logical excuse for prohibiting off-duty officers from engaging in recreational use, or, if ordered by a doctor, medical use of cannabis. This practice already occurs with other controlled substances. For example, two of the most common antidepressants prescribed in the United States, including to police officers dealing with anxiety, are Diazepam and Alprazolam. These are central nervous system depressants that impact the body in a manner analogous to alcohol. However, there has been no active call to preclude officers from taking prescribed antianxiety medications, even though they can have impairing effects if misused. This implies that police departments, as a widespread matter of practice, trust their officers to take prescribed medication responsibly and consistently. Once cannabis becomes a Schedule III drug, it will need to be addressed similarly.

The cultural implications are also significant. Officers, especially those in younger generations, increasingly see cannabis use as a socially acceptable alternative to alcohol. Data show that adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are consuming cannabis at significantly higher rates than members of previous generations, with many substituting cannabis for alcohol due to a perception of lower risk (Kerr et al., 2023). Prohibiting off-duty cannabis use could therefore have a chilling effect on recruitment and retention, particularly in agencies already struggling to fill vacancies. Agencies that do not evolve risk alienating a substantial segment of the workforce. The law enforcement attitude towards cannabis has already lagged behind changing cultural norms; if that is not remedied in the form of personnel policy changes, there may be long-lasting effects.

Public trust and civil liberties also need to be considered. Blanket prohibitions on off-duty cannabis

use would eventually be challenged in court, once the drug is rescheduled. Prohibiting officers from using cannabis off duty once rescheduled would likely be defeated in court, as there is no reasonable legal argument to prohibit the use of a prescribed medication as long as they can still perform their duties while at work. This is the current standard that is not expected to change in a post-cannabis prohibition era. This would be akin to a department prohibiting officers from using any other prescribed Schedule III substance, such as codeine, while off duty.

Courts have increasingly scrutinized punitive employment actions that are not based on demonstrable impairment but instead on the mere presence of THC metabolites in the body (Mead, 2019). Transparent, equitable policies that focus on behavior at work rather than off-duty choices are more likely to withstand legal scrutiny. The paramount policy question relating to off-duty cannabis use is how long agencies should preclude officers from engaging in cannabis consumption before reporting for their next shift. Current data show that latent cognitive impairment can last up to 24 hours in some individuals after consuming cannabis (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2024).

Conclusion

The evolving legal status of cannabis represents both a challenge and an opportunity for law enforcement. On one hand, the rise in cannabis use and shifting public attitudes demand more effective tools for impairment detection, such as the widespread integration of DRE training. On the other hand, legalization, especially at the federal level, will require law enforcement agencies to confront internal contradictions in policy, particularly around off-duty cannabis use. The science around impairment, the inconsistencies in crash data, and the shifting cultural

norms among younger officers all point to the need for a modern, evidence-based policy framework. Departments that proactively adapt through education, policy reform, and investment in performance-based testing will be better prepared to maintain officer accountability while respecting personal liberties.

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Original Research

Key Drivers of Job Satisfaction in Challenging Economic Climates

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This article focuses on the multifaceted factors influencing employee job satisfaction during economic downturns, with a particular attention on extrinsic rewards, person-environment fit, and management practices. The concept of person-environment fit is examined through its application in law enforcement recruitment, where rigorous testing aligns individual attributes with job demands, thereby reducing turnover and improving satisfaction. Additionally, the article critiques common management practices and advocates for more transparent communication, internal promotion, and leadership training to bridge the gap between executives and frontline employees. Rising employee frustration, driven by stagnant compensation and increased workloads, has led to declining satisfaction and heightened turnover intentions. Drawing on established theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, the article underscores the critical role of monetary incentives in fulfilling basic psychological needs and enhancing productivity. However, it also emphasizes that intrinsic factors (e.g., leadership quality, workplace culture, and personal meaning) play a vital role in sustaining employee commitment. Together, these insights offer a comprehensive framework for enhancing employee well-being and retention in challenging economic climates.

What factors affect employee job satisfaction? In the 20th century, researchers such as Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (2003) conducted groundbreaking research on human behavior and motivation, research that subsequent researchers have used to identify factors affecting job satisfaction. Some notable factors identified through said research include salary and benefits, the work environment, a sense of professional achievement, the meaningfulness of the work, opportunities for increased responsibility and advancement, reward systems, control over one's own work, and having a voice in decision-making. In this article, I examine factors affecting employee satisfaction and motivation.

Extrinsic Rewards' Effect on Job Satisfaction

Employee frustration levels can rise when they feel mistreated by their employers during economic downturns, leading to a decline in job satisfaction (Are key employees getting ready to leave as the recovery begins?, 2010). Historically, as in the 2008 economic downturn, staffing levels decrease while workloads do not, leaving employees with more work for no more pay (Sixel, 2010). Job satisfaction is clearly affected by salary (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009). A 2010 survey of 5,000 American households found that only 45 percent of respondents were satisfied with their jobs (U.S. job satisfaction rates hit 20-year low, 2010). In the survey, one of the key areas identified as causing employee job dissatisfaction was extrinsic rewards (U.S. job satisfaction rates hit 20-year low, 2010), which, according to Malik, Danish, and Usman

(2010), are generally monetary in nature and include things such as bonuses, salary increases, promotions, allowances, and grants.

Extrinsic rewards relate to factors commonly observed in well-known research on job satisfaction. Extrinsic rewards can affect the first level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as monetary rewards help address physiological needs such as food, clothing, and shelter (Huitt, 2007). Also, extrinsic rewards, like salary, are identified as a hygiene (i.e., aspects of the work environment) affecting job dissatisfaction in Herzberg's two-factor theory (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Extrinsic rewards, such as pay and bonuses, lead to increased job satisfaction and productivity, provided the rewards employees receive are perceived as equal to the effort they put forth (Malik, Danish, & Usman, 2010). Perhaps the most telling indicator of job satisfaction is employee retention, and according to Ryan and Sagas (2009), salary satisfaction is a reliable predictor of occupational turnover intentions.

Given the information presented above, it is reasonable to assume that employees will move on to new opportunities if the salary and benefits offered exceed what they currently receive. Nonetheless, one must not forget that while extrinsic rewards are essential job-satisfaction factors, they are not the only factors. Other factors, such as leadership, professional accomplishment, finding personal meaning in their work, intrinsic recognition, and work-environment fit, can enhance employee commitment and keep them from moving on, even if the extrinsic rewards they receive are not the highest available.

The Effect of Work-Environment Fit on Job Satisfaction

The pairing of employees and their work environment is one of the most researched areas in

organizational behavior. A significant theory in work-environment fit, when related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, is person-environment fit theory. Person-environment fit theory considers comparisons such as person-vocation fit, person-organization fit, person-job fit, person-group fit, and person-supervisor fit (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). These days, organizations in both the private and public sectors are considering person-environment fit in their hiring and selection processes. The law enforcement community is one great example of this.

The law enforcement community takes person-environment fit very seriously. It has been including person-job fit testing in its recruiting and selection processes with great success for many years now. For example, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc., the body that sets the national standards for law enforcement agencies seeking professional accreditation, requires stringent testing of law enforcement officer applicants to determine person-job fit. The commission requires all accredited law enforcement agencies to include applicant physical, emotional, and psychological/personality testing in their selection processes (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, 2010).

Physical compatibility testing can include physical agility tests and medical examinations. Emotional compatibility testing can include written examinations and situational simulations presented in either live or multimedia formats, all of which assess an applicant's problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills, and overall emotional age/intelligence. Law enforcement agencies routinely employ psychological and personality testing, which may include written examinations evaluated by licensed mental health professionals, as well as in-person interviews

conducted by such professionals (Arrigo & Claussen, 2003).

These types of person-job fit tests are used to determine the suitability of applicants to perform the job functions of a law enforcement officer, identify those who possess the attributes needed to ultimately succeed in the position, and identify those who fit the law enforcement work environment. Such testing reduces employee turnover and agency liability and, perhaps most importantly, helps predict which applicants will have their psychological needs fulfilled by the job. In other words, where there is person-job fit, the work environment will provide the employee the opportunity to fulfill their individual needs; thus, positively affecting their job satisfaction (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009).

The Effect of Management Practices on Job Satisfaction

Management practices can have a considerable impact on employee job satisfaction, and in today's declining economic environment, it is perhaps the easiest factor to control. One management practice that affects employees is requiring them to report to more than one leader at a time, resulting in conflicting orders or multiple work requests from those leaders. Another is when management directives and policies are vague or confusing. Management practices are easily controlled if upper management provides the proper oversight and demands middle-management accountability.

Employees must see that managers at all levels are involved and approachable. While it is not always true, many employees feel that managers, especially those in upper management or executive positions, are out of touch and do not understand the day-to-day stresses that affect the typical employee. Employees

begin to believe management has no concept of what really happens at the lowest levels of the organization, where "the rubber meets the road." Open, honest, and considered bidirectional communication is needed to avoid such misconceptions and the silo effect that often makes such beliefs into reality.

Another way to avoid such management and employee divides is to promote from within. Employees promoted from within the ranks may not always be accepted with open arms by every employee, but they are a known quantity to their fellow employees. This existing familiarity avoids the factor of the unknown when a manager is brought in from the outside. Most of the time, employees promoted from within are better positioned to quickly build a symbiotic working relationship with their new subordinates and make those subordinates feel they can approach their new leader with questions, concerns, and ideas.

One problem often seen in management and leadership is the promotion of existing employees into leadership positions solely because they were outstanding performers in their entry-level roles (Koonce, 2010). They may have been the best salesperson or accounting clerk, but simply having the requisite skills to be a great performer in an entry-level position does not mean they know how to be a good leader. Newly promoted managers are routinely provided with some type of new supervisor or manager training that shows them how to perform management tasks specific to the position or organization. What is often overlooked is the need to provide newly promoted employees with leadership training and education to help them understand critical leadership concepts, such as interpersonal skills, human dynamics, and behavior. Such training is needed so these new managers can become effective

leaders, not just good administrators.

Yet another way to address issues with management is to give employees a voice in evaluating management performance. A great example of this is the 360-degree performance evaluation, in which managers' performance is rated not only by their superiors but also by the employees they supervise (Lepsinger & Lucia, 2009). Many managers feel the feedback they receive from their employees is the most valuable of all. In my estimation, there is a significant drawback to the 360-degree evaluation. For managers to receive uncensored, honest feedback from their employees, employees must be allowed to remain anonymous.

Allowing for anonymous feedback, however, presents a problem. Purely anonymous feedback makes it difficult to distinguish between genuine, constructive input and comments driven by personal grievances from disgruntled employees seeking to undermine an otherwise competent manager. Perhaps the best way to overcome this problem is not to tie the employees' comments to the actual performance evaluation result, such as a numerical score, which may affect the manager's extrinsic rewards. It could be a separate, distinct part of the evaluation process in which the manager's rater compares current employee feedback with that received in the previous rating period, using that comparison to mentor and guide the manager toward greater future success in leading employees.

Conclusion

Numerous factors affect employee job satisfaction; only a few have been examined in this article. Based on the research reviewed and my professional experience, it seems clear that each of the factors discussed can positively or negatively affect job satisfaction. With all of that in mind, there

appear to be two keys to successfully promoting job satisfaction. The first is to recognize the factors that exist in one's own work environment, and the second is to exploit those that promote job satisfaction and to mediate those that promote job dissatisfaction.

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Original Research

Parental Liability in Juvenile Firearm Violence

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Juvenile firearm violence in the United States presents growing challenges for parental responsibility. This meta-synthesis examines parents' criminal liability when their children commit firearm-related offenses, including school shootings, homicides, suicides, and accidental discharges. Prosecutors in high-profile cases have shifted towards parental accountability for negligent storage, failure to act on warning signs, or limiting firearm access. One of the driving factors behind prosecuting parents is the inconsistency of Child Access Prevention (CAP) and safe-storage laws across the United States. Nationally, millions of children currently live in homes with firearms stored unsafely by their parents. Standardizing CAP laws and promoting secure firearm storage may improve future juvenile firearm violence. However, future research should assess long-term behavioral changes among parents and juveniles and track prosecutorial trends.

Parental Liability in Juvenile Firearm Violence

Should parents be held criminally responsible for their child's firearm (i.e., long gun and handgun) violence? In the United States, parents are increasingly being held criminally responsible for firearm offenses committed by their underage (younger than 18-years-old) children. Juvenile firearm violence encompasses a broader spectrum of harm outside of school shootings and includes homicides, accidental discharges, and suicides. Historically, criminal liability has been placed on children for their criminal behavior. Recently, however, there has been an emerging pattern in school shootings where some prosecutors have targeted parents or legal guardians because of their role in allowing their child access to firearms or failing to intervene when warning signs were present. In this meta-synthesis, I analyzed criminal liability across all juvenile firearm crimes, including school shootings, homicides, suicides, along with accidental discharges and their relationship to

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, safe-storage statutes, and prosecutorial strategies.

Parental Liability in School Shootings

In 2024, Michigan's prosecutors brought charges against the parents of the Oxford High School shooter, which led to their conviction for the criminal acts their child committed (Zangari, 2024). These charges against the parents created a turning point in U.S. history for how some prosecutors view school shooting cases. In September 2024, charges were brought against the parents of the Apalachee High School shooter. More recently, a Texas mother provided ammunition and tactical gear to her son; a child who had shown violent tendencies and was planning a school shooting at Rodes Middle School in San Antonio, Texas. These high-profile examples often supersede other cases involving accidental shootings and suicides that were facilitated because of unsecured firearms, and non-school homicides

committed by juveniles. These cases signal a broader national crisis of juvenile gun violence in the United States.

Parental Liability Beyond School Shootings

Parental liability has extended further with prosecutors seeking criminal charges against parents in cases of accidental shootings, suicides, and non-school homicides. For example, in 2025, parents in Michigan served jail time and received probation because their 9-year-old child accidentally shot himself with a firearm he found in a jacket pocket at his home (Cosme Torres, 2025). In Virginia, a teacher was shot by a 6-year-old, who brought a firearm from home to school (U.S. Department of Justice, 2023). In Utah, a string of accidental shootings took place in 2024 in which two juveniles were killed and one was injured because of access to unsecured firearms in their homes (Dunphey, 2024). Despite surpassing over 400 incidents of accidental shootings nationwide for the first time in 2023, Utah lawmakers rejected a bill that would require secure firearm storage (Dunphey, 2024). These cases underscore the preventive value of secured storage legislation that goes beyond mass shootings but reflects the political dynamics behind implementing such a policy.

Child Access Prevention (CAP) and Safe Storage Laws

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws are designed to be reactive and only come into play when a child gains access to a firearm. In contrast, secure storage laws are more proactive and require firearms to be unloaded and stored in locked containers. As of January 2024, 34 states and the District of Columbia, have enacted CAP laws (RAND Corporation, 2024). In addition, CAP laws can vary from state to state in their application, with some states placing a greater emphasis on storage requirements. At the same time,

other states penalize adults if a child gains access to and uses a firearm. However, the overall purpose of CAP laws goes beyond charging parents in school shootings. Often, CAP laws are used to prosecute parents whose child was involved in violent crimes, accidental deaths, suicides, and other firearm-related injuries (RAND Corporation, 2024).

In Colorado, several laws apply to parental responsibility and how minors have access to firearms. Colorado's CAP law is codified under Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 18-12-108.7. Under this law, parents are held to a level of accountability when their children have access to firearms. Criminal liability under this statute involves someone who intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly provides a juvenile with access to firearms or fails to take responsible steps to prevent firearm access (C.R.S. § 18-12-108.7). Moreover, C.R.S. § 18-12-114 allows criminal penalties if a firearm is not stored responsibly and the owner knows or should have known a juvenile could access the firearm without parental permission. Both laws reflect a level of prevention and parental accountability aimed at preventing shootings and crimes by minors. On a broader spectrum, CAP laws help to limit mass violence as well as unintentional shootings and suicides among minors (RAND Corporation, 2024).

At the time of the Oxford school shooting in Michigan, there was no CAP law in place. Michigan enacted a CAP law following the school shooting, which took effect on February 13, 2024. Included in that legislation is a requirement for firearm owners to securely store firearms when a minor is present or likely to be present. The Oxford school shooting case is unique because the parents were charged and convicted of offenses committed by their child, something no other state has done before. The

mother of the Oxford school shooter, Jennifer Crumbley, was convicted on four counts of manslaughter. Court records indicate she failed to see or act on the warning signs before the shooting took place. Additionally, the Court concluded she acted negligently and recklessly, allowing her child to have access to a firearm. Ultimately, the jury concluded Jennifer was criminally liable for the school shooting her child committed (People of the State of Michigan v. James Robert Crumbley; People of the State of Michigan v. Jennifer Lynn Crumbley, 2022). Jennifer Crumbley and her husband James Crumbley were sentenced to 10 to 15 years in prison.

The Apalachee High School shooting is also unique because Georgia lacks any CAP laws that would hold parents accountable. Here, the father Colin Gray, failed to secure the firearm properly, allowing his son to access the firearm without supervision. Additionally, he failed to take appropriate action when warning signs were present. The prosecution decided to charge the father with four counts of Involuntary Manslaughter, two counts of Second-Degree Murder, and eight counts of Cruelty to Children (Georgia Bureau of Investigation, 2024), a case that is still pending. These changes are related to the AR-15-style rifle used in the school shooting.

National Trends

Over the last several years, the number of households in the United States with firearms has increased. Estimates are that around 30 million children have firearms in their homes, an increase of 7 million since 2015 (Miller & Azrael, 2022). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) reported that between 2015 and 2021, 3,498 Americans died from unintentional gun injuries, of which 713 were people under the age of 17. Additional studies have revealed that families who store firearms in a secure

storage container often leave the firearms loaded and the container unlocked (Berrigan et al., 2019; Miller & Azrael, 2022).

In a 40-year analysis (1980-2019), Hamlin's (2021) findings indicated the effectiveness of CAP laws was inconclusive when school shootings are involved. Data reported by Everytown Research & Policy (2023) showed that in approximately 76 percent of cases involving school shootings, the shooter obtained the firearm from their home. Anderson and Sabia (2018) found little evidence to support that CAP laws were a deterrent to school-related shooting deaths. One of the issues with measuring the effectiveness of CAP laws in school shootings is its definition. Currently, there is no universally accepted definition for a school shooting (Langman, 2015, 2016). Databases containing school shooting data vary in detail and in what qualifies as a school shooting. That lack of consistency in defining school shootings affects researchers' ability to measure the outcomes of CAP laws effectively. In contrast, Cannon et al. (2023) revealed a 72 percent decline in unintentional shootings among minors in states with strong secure-storage laws. In cases involving youth firearm suicide and accidental injury homicides, Athey et al. (2024) concluded that CAP firearm storage laws effectively reduced both outcomes.

Policy Implications and Future Directions

The expansion of parental liability in juvenile firearm violence raises concerns about whether the punishment matches the severity of the crime, whether the law is applied consistently and equitably, and whether the law discourages others from unsafe firearm storage. There must be a balance between public safety and using parents as scapegoats for unstructured gun regulations. Solutions could include

aligning CAP and storage laws across all states, increasing awareness of safe firearm storage, and enhancing technologies for accessing secured firearms. Future studies could evaluate the effects on long-term storage behavior, parental prosecutions, and their correlation to juvenile firearm violence.

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GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

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CMU's criminal justice faculty bring years of academic and practical experience to the classroom. They have each earned a doctorate and their professional backgrounds span the fields of policing, courts and corrections. The combination of academic rigor and professional experience provides students with strong academic degrees, and makes them highly competitive when seeking employment in various criminal justice career fields.



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There are several academic options available to students through the CMU criminal justice program. Those options include the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Criminal Justice, Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) with POST Academy certification, and minors in criminal justice or forensic investigation. The BAS track allows students to earn academic credit towards their baccalaureate degree for attending the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Academy. Students completing the BAS leave CMU with both a bachelor's degree and Colorado POST certification, which makes them able to immediately seek employment with law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Colorado.

The criminal justice program also facilitates internships with many local, state and federal agencies, and provides a variety of other opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning and research. As a result, CMU's criminal justice students are well positioned to pursue graduate school or employment.



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Criminal justice education is the professional study of the practices and institutions of governance dedicated to upholding ethical social control; deterring and mitigating crime; sanctioning those who violate laws through criminal penalties; and rehabilitating offenders so they may successfully reintegrate into society. CMU's criminal justice curricula includes general education requirements and study within all three core components of the American criminal justice system (i.e., policing, courts and corrections); as well as, research-related course work and other electives.

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- Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher (on a 4.0 scale)
- Official transcript of all undergraduate colleges and universities attended
- Transcript of any previous master's degree work if applicable
- One-page written statement of purpose describing the applicant's career goals and how the Master of Science in Criminal Justice will help the applicant achieve those goals. Applicants may choose to schedule a personal interview with a member of the Graduate Admissions staff in lieu of a written statement. Schedule a virtual appointment at lmc.edu/meet.

NOTE: Applicants are not required to submit GRE or MAT scores.

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Course Length: 8 weeks

Program Duration: 1 year

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As the United States criminal justice system undergoes structural changes and experiences increased scrutiny, the need for professionals who understand how to successfully navigate these new changes is greater than ever.

The program curriculum covers vital topics like Advanced Research Methods; Leadership and Change; Perspectives on Race, Class, Gender, and Crime in America; Criminal Justice Policy, Planning, and Evaluation; and Organizational Management and Administration.

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(Source: CBNC)

STAY ON TRACK

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MEET THE FACULTY

Program coordinator Dr. Eric Watters had a 20-year career in policing, spending 10 years at the command staff level. He has more than 16 years of experience in higher education and holds a PhD in Leadership (Criminal Justice specialization) and master's degrees in Justice Administration (Homeland Security specialization) and Public Administration. He is also a graduate of the Southern Police Institute's 136th Administrative Officers Course.



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