

From: Adam Linhardt alinhardt@keysnews.com
Subject: RE: MCSO software article ...
Date: October 8, 2015 at 3:57 PM
To: Thomas Milone tommilone@earthlink.net

Keeping digital tabs on deputies - 08/24/2014

Tracking use-of-force incidents with Monroe County Sheriff's deputies has entered the 21st century.

Whenever a Monroe County Sheriff's deputy pulls out a Taser, unholsters his or her gun, speeds in a patrol car on the way to a call, or takes a sick day, supervisors will know about it.

All that data goes into a computer software program.

The sheriff's office calls the \$30,000 software the Early Warning System.

It's designed to help Internal Affairs supervisors keep tabs on deputies as well as corrections officers. It costs about \$4,000 a year to maintain the software.

The system was purchased in 2007, but didn't come fully

online until 2010,
said Capt. Chad Scibilia, the inspector general of the Internal
Affairs
Division.

The system is part of the larger computer program called the
Administrative
Investigative System, which is linked into the human
resources software at
the sheriff's office.

It's essentially an integrated reporting system that connects
all the
sheriff's office computer systems into one database. That
means it links
offense reporting and use of force reports as well as
personnel systems that
record use of sick and vacation time, said spokeswoman
Becky Herrin. The
system then triggers a flag when a deputy or employee hits a
level
considered to be above the accepted guidelines.

"These triggers are automatically sent to supervisors via
email and allow
those supervisors, administrators including Capt. Scibilia or

Sheriff Rick

Ramsay, to look more closely to see if there is a problem with the employee that can be resolved, either with counseling, with discipline or with some other type of action," Herrin said. "Reports can also be run at will in order to examine trends, or to see if there are broader issues that need to be addressed by training."

Put another way: "It's a way supervisors can tell if something is out of the norm," Scibilia said. "Are they a little heavy with their foot when driving? Are they taking a lot of sick days on Tuesday after a three-day holiday? What are the trends with this officer, and does it need to be addressed?"

It's surprisingly simple. Punch in a name and you get access to a use-of-force history, on-patrol driving record and citizen complaints lodged against the deputy.

"An extreme case would be an officer with a high number of use-of-force complaints that needs to be addressed," said Herrin.

The system works like this: Any time a deputy fills out an incident report, the data goes into the computer system, which breaks down the information that Sheriff Rick Ramsay and Internal Affairs want to keep track of. This includes deputy-involved crashes, deputy-involved domestic disturbances, Taser use, excessive speed, firearm use, sick leave and use of force.

Any time a deputy uses force against a citizen, including everything from putting hands on a person to the extreme example of shooting a person, that information is filed as a Subject Resistance Report. The report is also filed into the system.

A supervisor is supposed to monitor that data and address any issues with

the deputy, but if he or she doesn't handle it, Scibilia has immediate access to the data and can review it at will.

The system is designed to alert supervisors before any issues with a deputy become a bigger problem.

"What are the trends? What it does is say, 'Hey supervisor, this person has stepped out of our normal threshold for this or that,' and the supervisor can address it," Scibilia said.

Moreover, the sheriff's office has thresholds that it keeps an eye on. For example, any deputy who uses excessive speed more than eight times in 180 days spurs an alert on the system. GPS units on the patrol cars monitor that data.

The sheriff's office training staff also use the system to study the areas they need to focus on for continuing education.

"For instance, if we notice a lot of Taser uses where one of the barbs is not hitting the target, then our training division may take that data and step back and say, 'Maybe we need to do more training on how to aim a Taser,'" Scibilia said, adding he was being hypothetical.

Herrin added the system is not always used to discipline employees; it's also used to track deputies who are doing well and eligible for commendations or advancement.

"And more often than not, this system alerts us to issues people may be having that can be helped," she said. "They might be having trouble at home, and we can get them some counseling through our Employee Assistance Program, or maybe we have fallen short on our training in some area, and we can correct that problem by additional training."

alinhardt@keysnews.com