



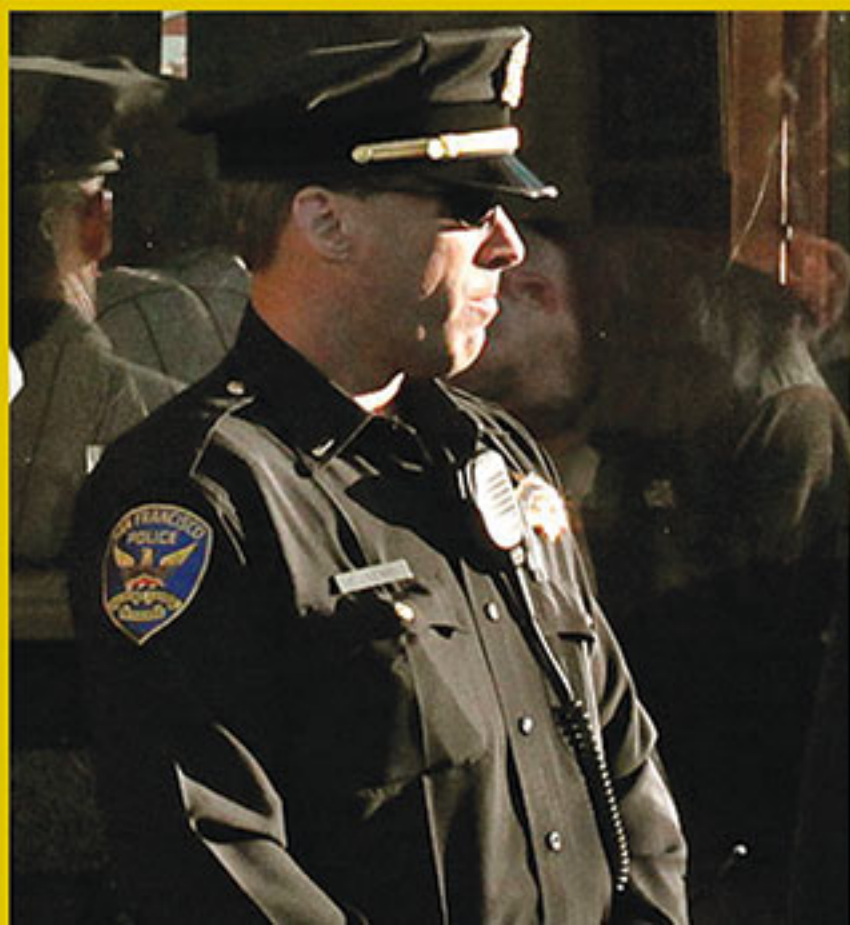
# Common Sense

# POLICE SUPERVISION

PRACTICAL  
TIPS FOR THE  
FIRST-LINE LEADER

**Fifth Edition**

**Gerald W. Garner**



**COMMON SENSE  
POLICE SUPERVISION**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Gerald W. Garner**, a 44-year veteran of law enforcement, is Chief of the Greeley, Colorado Police Department. Specializing in law enforcement leadership, police-press relations, and officer survival, he has written eight books and over 200 magazine articles. He instructs widely and has served as a guest lecturer for the FBI National Academy, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Western Institute for Police Administration, and the National Park Service. He also has extensive experience instructing for police academies and colleges.

Garner holds a Master's Degree in Administration of Justice and is a P.O.S.T. certified law enforcement instructor in Colorado. His undergraduate degree is in Journalism.

During his law enforcement career, the author has held various assignments including patrol officer, patrol sergeant, detective sergeant, crime prevention specialist, SWAT hostage negotiator, public information officer, watch commander, and division chief. Greeley, a city of 95,000 people, is the second jurisdiction in which he has served as law enforcement chief executive.

**Fifth Edition**

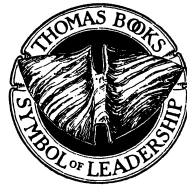
# **COMMON SENSE POLICE SUPERVISION**

**Practical Tips for the First-Line Leader**

*By*

**GERALD W. GARNER**

*Chief of Police  
Greeley Police Department  
Greeley, Colorado*



**CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.**  
*Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.*

*Published and Distributed Throughout the World by*

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.  
2600 South First Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62704

This book is protected by copyright. No part of  
it may be reproduced in any manner without written  
permission from the publisher. All rights reserved.

©2014 by CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.

ISBN 978-0-398-08792-0 (paper)  
ISBN 978-0-398-08793-7 (ebook)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2013046704

First Edition, 1981  
Second Edition, 1995  
Third Edition, 2003  
Fourth Edition, 2008  
Fifth Edition, 2014

*With THOMAS BOOKS careful attention is given to all details of manufacturing  
and design. It is the Publisher's desire to present books that are satisfactory as to their  
physical qualities and artistic possibilities and appropriate for their particular use.  
THOMAS BOOKS will be true to those laws of quality that assure a good name  
and good will.*

*Printed in the United States of America  
CR-R-1*

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Garner, Gerald W.

Common sense police supervision : practical tips for the first-line leader /  
by Gerald W. Garner, Chief, Greeley Police Department, Greeley,  
Colorado. -- Fifth edition.

pages cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-398-08792-0 (pbk.) -- ISBN 978-0-398-08793-7 (ebook)

1. Police--Supervision of. I. Title.

HV936.S8G37 2014

363.2'2--dc 23

2013046704

*To  
Kathy*



## PREFACE

Leading law enforcement personnel is unlike any other endeavor on Earth. It is not easy. The work is saddled with great challenges, but it can produce tremendous rewards.

A great deal has been written and spoken about law enforcement supervision and leadership. Some of it has been quite helpful. At other times, theory has smothered practicality. Considerable psychobabble and “modern management” gibberish has been uttered on the topic. Neither is very useful for the working law enforcement leader.

This book aims to stimulate the veteran, novice, or would-be police supervisor to utilize his or her most powerful tool in carrying out the duties of an effective leader. That tool is COMMON SENSE. Made up of life experience, good judgment, prudence, and a well-developed ability for solid reasoning and logical decision making, common sense will guide the intelligent individual in finding effective solutions to most of the problems he or she will encounter while leading police personnel.

The first edition of *Common Sense Police Supervision* presented the basics needed by the successful police supervisor. The second edition bolstered them and added chapters for the leader facing the twin challenges of leading his troops into the era of community-oriented policing while keeping them safe on the street. The third edition updated the leadership guidelines and added two more chapters. One chapter furnished the law enforcement leader with the know-how he will need when called upon to represent his agency in front of the news media. A second offered him guidance in leading his people to provide exceptional customer service in a day when true service is increasingly rare. This fifth edition furnishes more real-life examples pertaining to leadership issues and builds upon another chapter, this one aimed at helping the leader plan his future in a law enforcement organization.

This book will not enable its reader to speak glibly in the latest, pop management catch phrases and buzz words. What it DOES offer is solid, practical leadership advice developed from the experiences and observations of real police supervisors.



While this text emphasizes the extreme importance of the police sergeant, its contents will be of equal value to anyone in a position of leadership in a law enforcement agency. Although the narrative most often uses the male gender, it should be obvious to all that the choice is for ease of reading only. Women long ago established that they are the equal of their male counterparts as effective law enforcement leaders. In the future, they should be better represented in law enforcement's leadership ranks.

It is the author's sincere belief that the current or hopeful supervisor who follows the dictates of his or her ethics, conscience and common sense cannot help but serve law enforcement as a highly capable leader. It is towards that potential for excellence that these efforts are directed.

G.W.G.

## INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to learn too much about how to be an effective leader. A great leader never stops learning. He or she does it for the right reason: to benefit others by helping guide the people, policies, and operations of a modern law enforcement organization. But there is a more “selfish” yet equally legitimate reason for learning to excel as a leader. In a world in which seemingly everyone is willing to sue everybody else for just about anything under the sun, the responsible police supervisor will see to it that he protects his organization, his people, and himself by doing things the right way for the right reasons at all times. Equally important, he will ensure that those he leads do the same. He will assure that any lawsuit ever targeted on him and his agency alleging “failure to supervise” does not accurately describe the way in which he leads his law enforcement employees.

This book emphasizes the real value of common sense in good leadership practices. The first two chapters examine just what supervision means and seek to show the hopeful leader what he or she needs to know and do to make the leap from front-line officer to first-line supervisor.

Chapter Three discusses supervisory ethics and professional responsibilities while Chapter Four explores the key qualities of true leadership. Chapter Five looks at the police leader’s tasks as educator and trainer and offers some helpful hints for succeeding as an instructor. Chapter Six examines the supervisor’s vital job as an evaluator of employee performance and gives tips on how to do it well. Pitfalls awaiting the careless job performance appraiser are exposed, too.

Chapter Seven scrutinizes the leader’s role as a disciplinarian in the correction process, while Chapter Eight covers his or her work as a planner in areas ranging from special operations to personnel deployment to personal goal setting. Meanwhile, Chapter Nine targets the very important communication function and furnishes concrete suggestions for improving both oral and written communication skills. Barriers to effective communication are identified. Chapter Ten supplies problem-solving advice to aid the police

leader as an effective counselor to subordinates experiencing a variety of difficulties.

Chapter Eleven sees the law enforcement leader as a manager of human and material resources who can visualize the integral parts of the organizational “Big Picture.” Chapter Twelve delves into the difficult job of the complaint or grievance processor. The proper handling of allegations of police misconduct is detailed. Chapter Thirteen takes a candid look at some special problems such as organizational survival for the ethical police leader.

Chapter Fourteen analyzes the first-line leader’s pivotal role in today’s community-oriented style of policing. Chapter Fifteen reminds the police leader of his or her responsibilities as a teacher, inspector, advocate and role model for officer safety.

The last three chapters are presented in a slightly different format than the rest of the book. Chapter Sixteen gives the first-line leader the skills he will need when he is given the task of serving as his agency’s on-scene spokesperson in front of the ladies and gentlemen of the news media. Chapter Seventeen serves as a resource the leader can rely upon when he educates his subordinates on the intricacies of providing exceptional customer service, a commodity too often missing in both public and private sectors today. Chapter Eighteen is intended to help the police leader in planning his career and his future.

In addition, each chapter concludes with a brief “Points to Remember” section that provides a quickly-read and easily remembered checklist of the chapter’s salient points. This feature should prove especially useful for today’s in-a-hurry reader.

Not a single law enforcement organization in the country has too many competent leaders. It is time to get on with the task of creating more.

# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Preface</i> .....	vii
<i>Introduction</i> .....	ix
<b>Chapter One: What Is Supervision?</b> .....	3
Theory and Common Sense .....	4
Supervision in General .....	5
Police Supervision in Particular .....	10
Some Specific Tasks .....	15
Summary .....	18
Points to Remember .....	18
<b>Chapter Two: Preparation for the Role of Police Supervisor</b> .....	21
Psychological Preparation .....	21
What's to Know?.....	29
Test-Taking Skills .....	33
Boards and Assessment Centers.....	36
A Change in Outlook.....	42
Summary.....	43
Points to Remember .....	44
<b>Chapter Three: Ethics of Police Supervision</b> .....	45
The Police Supervisor's Code of Ethics .....	46
Responsibilities to Management.....	47
Responsibilities to Officers .....	54
Responsibilities to Self.....	58
Responsibilities to the Community .....	61
Summary.....	62
Points to Remember .....	63

<b>Chapter Four: Qualities of a Leader</b> .....	65
Characteristics of a Leader .....	66
Bars to Leadership .....	75
Command Presence.....	83
Morale as a Tool.....	85
Summary .....	87
Points to Remember .....	87
<b>Chapter Five: The Police Leader as an Educator</b> .....	89
Responsibility to Instruct .....	90
Topics for Police Instruction .....	91
Proper Use of Lesson Plans .....	94
The Presentation .....	99
Aids to Instruction .....	104
Summary .....	107
Points to Remember.....	107
<b>Chapter Six: The Police Leader as an Evaluator</b> .....	109
Purposes of Evaluation.....	110
Means of Evaluation .....	112
Guidelines and Pitfalls .....	121
Inspection and Follow-up .....	131
Summary .....	134
Points to Remember .....	134
<b>Chapter Seven: The Police Leader as a Disciplinarian</b> .....	137
Purposes of Correction .....	138
Requisites of Fair and Effective Discipline.....	144
Importance of the Supervisor in Discipline .....	151
Summary .....	152
Points to Remember .....	153
<b>Chapter Eight: The Police Leader as a Planner</b> .....	155
Elements of a Plan .....	156
Writing Plan Objectives .....	160
Planning Goals for Employees .....	162
Projects for the Boss.....	164
Planning Personal Priorities .....	165
Summary .....	168
Points to Remember .....	168

<b>Chapter Nine: The Police Leader as a Communicator .....</b>	<b>171</b>
Elements of Good Communication.....	173
Hazards to Good Communication.....	182
Benefits of Good Communication.....	186
Written versus Oral Communication.....	187
Summary.....	189
Points to Remember .....	190
<b>Chapter Ten: The Police Leader as a Counselor.....</b>	<b>191</b>
Identifying Personal Problems.....	192
Problem-Solving Techniques.....	196
Sources of Assistance.....	201
Counselor-Counseled Relationship .....	204
Summary.....	209
Points to Remember .....	209
<b>Chapter Eleven: The Police Leader as a Manager .....</b>	<b>211</b>
The Management Role.....	212
Handling Specialized Tasks .....	217
The Finished Product.....	220
Attitude Towards Change .....	229
Summary.....	231
Points to Remember .....	232
<b>Chapter Twelve: The Police Leader as a Complaint Processor.....</b>	<b>233</b>
Allegations of Misconduct .....	234
Internal Complaints.....	248
Employee Grievances .....	250
Labor Issues.....	251
Summary.....	256
Points to Remember .....	257
<b>Chapter Thirteen: Some Special Problems .....</b>	<b>259</b>
Straight Talk .....	260
Organizational Survival .....	263
Internal Strife.....	267
Corruption or Incompetence? .....	270
Current Issues.....	274
The Boss from Hell.....	276

Summary .....	279
Points to Remember .....	279
<b>Chapter Fourteen: The Police Leader's Role in</b>	
<b>Community Policing</b> .....	281
What Is It? .....	281
Problem Solving.....	283
The Supervisor's Role .....	285
Summary.....	289
Points to Remember .....	289
<b>Chapter Fifteen: The Police Leader's Role in Officer Survival</b> .....	
Training Responsibilities .....	293
Inspection Responsibilities .....	294
Equipment Responsibilities .....	295
Intervention Responsibilities .....	296
Employees' Emotional Survival .....	297
Explaining Officer Safety.....	298
The Supervisor as Role Model.....	299
Summary.....	299
Points to Remember .....	300
<b>Chapter Sixteen: The Police Leader as Agency Spokesperson</b> .....	
Get the Facts Straight .....	302
Anticipate and Practice .....	303
What to Say .....	305
Doing It on Television .....	307
Traps to Avoid.....	308
Writing a News Release .....	311
Summary .....	315
Points to Remember.....	316
<b>Chapter Seventeen: The Police Leader's Role in Exceptional</b>	
<b>Customer Service</b> .....	317
What Do They Want? .....	318
What They Don't Want.....	320
How Can They Be Reached? .....	322
Good Call or Bad?.....	324
Summary.....	326
Points to Remember .....	326

<b>Chapter Eighteen: Where Do I Go from Here?</b> .....	329
Planning for the Future .....	329
Touching All the Bases .....	333
The Right and Wrong Ways .....	333
Going All the Way .....	338
Summary .....	342
Points to Remember .....	342
<i>Index</i> .....	345





**COMMON SENSE  
POLICE SUPERVISION**



## Chapter 1

### WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

“He takes care of you.”

“He helps you.”

“She looks out for your interests.”

“She mentors and encourages me.”

“He picks on you.”

“He gets on your case.”

“She’s a pain in the neck (or worse)!”

“She plays favorites.”

The two separate categories of descriptions would appear to describe two very different individuals. The first set would be good descriptors for Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy. The second group might better be used to describe Darth Vader or some other character from a bad dream.

Yet, all of these descriptive comments have been and could be attributable to employees describing a person quite important to their workaday lives: their supervisor. At one time or another, more than a few members of the national work force have felt many or most of these emotions for the man or woman they know as “boss.”

In reality, of course, what constitutes a supervisor and the manner in which he supervises is a bit too complex for such simplistic explanations, however sincerely they might be felt.

What, precisely, is a supervisor? What is it the supervisor is supposed to do? Many attempts have been made in an effort to answer that question.

Over the past decade much has been said and written about supervision and supervisors. Some of it has even been put forward by people who *know* something about their subject matter. Such contributions have been valuable to those charged with leadership responsibilities in virtually every field of human endeavor. Many of these hints on how to supervise effectively are equally applicable to men and women in all types of occupations.

At the same time, however, each field of work has its own peculiarities; it only follows that there must be corresponding adjustments in the supervisory function. Law enforcement, by the very nature of the work performed and the special nature of its performers, certainly involves some aspects of supervision not found in other fields of endeavor. This chapter will examine some of these peculiarities and their meanings for supervisors and the supervised.

## THEORY AND COMMON SENSE

When one speaks of theories, he is of necessity talking about a particular concept or view of something that generally involves a set of guiding rules or principles. The theorist is most likely proposing an explanation for something in terms of propositions or suggestions of fact. If the theorist happens to be living in the ancient world and is attempting to explain thunder, for example, he may speak in terms of angry gods, riled godly sensibilities, and a need to humble a human race gotten out of line. If, instead, he is a modern management theorist attempting to reason out what it is that motivates people to do work, he may talk of personal needs, drives, and interrelationships.

All of this is well and good. The practical supervisor's most common complaint with the theorist, however, is that he sometimes fails to relate his neatly constructed postulates to the everyday world of work with its attendant everyday crises. The working supervisor may not be a student of formal theories himself. He may be a very pragmatic individual who daily sees the effects of what the theorists are trying to talk about as seen in his workers and the work they do. He may not be able to label their behavior as neatly as the theorist could do. The important thing for him is that the behavior is real.

Unfortunately, what the formal theorists are trying to say to help the practicing supervisor may be lost or overlooked in the demanding

practicalities of the everyday push to get the job done. At the same time, the working supervisor, regardless of his field, does have something going for him that many theorists may heed far too little in their well-intentioned efforts. That very real something is frequently referred to as *common sense*.

In defining common sense, dictionaries use such phrases as “normal intelligence” and “practical sense.” Common sense includes considerably more. Common sense also entails the practical application of good judgment, prudence, and an aptitude for calm and logical reasoning. It is the total of formal learning added to life experience. Yet its total is more than formal education and life added up. Common sense might be what the bright if primitive individual with no formal training whatever might apply when faced with a new situation or problem.

The police officer must, of necessity, possess a large ration of common sense. It sees him through the field situation or crisis that no training manual or departmental procedure deals with directly. By applying good common sense to procedures or techniques which he *has* been taught, this very practical officer frequently can solve the unique problem at hand.

It is not reasonable to expect that a supervisor can survive and prosper with only good common sense and nothing else any more than it is reasonable to assume that the patrol officer can successfully do his job with no formal training and only his ample common sense to guide his actions. With common sense and training in practical skills and a bit of theory, the contemporary supervisor can do his best as a leader.

Theory of supervision can be picked up from a myriad of books and professional journal articles. It will remain this book’s aim to show the supervisor the great potential contained within the intelligent application of his own common sense to a variety of leadership tasks.

## **SUPERVISION IN GENERAL**

Not unlike the term *common sense*, the word “supervision” invites some fairly standard responses in any attempt at definition. One often sees references to “the overseeing of the actions or performances of others.” Another not unreasonable phrase notes that supervision is