

After-Action Review and Reporting: An Introduction

eLearn Course Overview & Outline



After-Action Review and Reporting

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An Introduction



Overview

After-Action Review and Reporting: An Introduction provides an overview of the role of after-action reviews as an effective organizational learning tool and powerful community policing strategy. It equips law enforcement personnel with the basic understanding of when and in what circumstances an after-action may be best utilized, as well as how to conduct impactful reviews that result in written reports, including guidance on ways to organize, document, and communicate the findings of an after-action review. The course includes an assortment of multi-media resources which participants can utilize within the course itself and after they've completed it.

Scope

After-Action Review and Reporting: An Introduction directly supports public safety agencies in their own after-action review processes with the ultimate goal of moving towards incorporating after-actions into the daily operations and culture of the organization.

Target Audience

The *After-Action Review and Reporting: An Introduction* eLearn course is designed as a professional development program and is intended for public safety practitioners. Although designed specifically for first line supervisors or officers in charge of conducting/overseeing the after-action process within an organization, the program is appropriate for all local, state, and tribal law enforcement personnel, regardless of rank or position. It may also be a valuable tool for non-law enforcement community stakeholders to enhance their awareness of community policing efforts.

Prerequisites/Requirements

Although there are no prerequisites, participants with a fundamental knowledge of the after-action review process and community policing practices are encouraged to participate.

Participants will need access to a computer with reliable internet connection and speakers. The course utilizes technology-enhanced media that includes on-screen text, graphics, narration, and video segments in an interactive and user-friendly eLearn environment.

Course Length

After-Action Review and Reporting: An Introduction is a self-paced, online, elearning course designed in modular format. Although it has a minimum uninterrupted run-time of 60 minutes, participants should allow approximately 2 hours to complete the course. The technology-enhanced design allows participants to start, stop, and resume the training based on the demands of their schedule, as well as revisit explore external content and resources as often as they would like.

Course Evaluation and Assessment Strategy

The *After-Action Review and Reporting: An Introduction* eLearn course utilizes standalone pre- and post-tests based on the program's curriculum content. VCPI does not have a pass/fail requirement for eLearn participation. Upon submission of the post-test, participants may print a transcript of the test that includes marked questions and the participant's score. The following questions are used for the pre- and post-tests.

1. The law-enforcement after-action review process is mostly closely aligned with standards established by which of the following industries?
 - a. Tourism
 - b. Military
 - c. Education
 - d. All of the above

2. Which of the following is true about the after-action review process?
 - a. It is a formal investigation of officer error.
 - b. It is a performance critique.
 - c. It is an apprehension strategy.
 - d. It is focused on learning and improvement.

3. The after-action process can only be conducted after a high-profile incident:
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. Making the after-action process a routine practice after incidents makes the process easier and a known standard for a department:
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. The after-action review enables those involved in an incident to:
 - a. Justify their actions after using force
 - b. Determine who was at fault
 - c. Determine which officers met department standards and who did not
 - d. Discover what happened during an incident, why it happened, how to sustain strengths, and how to improve weaknesses

6. A condensed, informal after-action process method is all any police department needs.

- a. True
 - b. False
7. Which of the following is not one of the four main components of a written after-action report, according to the National Police Foundation's After-Action Review/Incident Review Guidebook?
- a. Background and methodology
 - b. Description of the Incident and Response
 - c. Promising Practices, Lesson Learned, and Recommendations
 - d. Key Areas of Focus
 - e. Performance Critique

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Course Design Overview

Module One: Introduction to After-Action Reporting

This module introduces the concept of utilizing after-action reviews and reporting as an effective organizational learning tool which aligns with and directly supports the principles of community policing: partnerships, problem solving and organizational transformation. Participants consider the merits of implementing AARs as a means to continuously learn, evaluate and improve daily operations, critical incident responses, internal and external communications, and more.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the basic principles of community policing as they relate to the after-action process.
2. Discover what makes after-actions a credible learning tool for law enforcement.
3. Explore the role of after-actions in identifying and addressing wellness issues stemming from critical incidents.

Instructional Strategies

This module is delivered through eLearning components that include audio narration, visual vignettes, interviews with subject-matter experts and practitioners, on-screen text, interactive activities and Test Your Knowledge questions.



Figure 1. Included throughout the course are videos that provide context and demonstrate realistic application of AARs.

Content Outline

Module One: Introduction to After-Action Reporting

- a. Common Language
- b. SME Video: Why Training on AARs is Important

- c. After-Action Reviews Align with Community Policing
 - Community Partnerships
 - Problem Solving
 - Organizational Transformation
 - Explore Additional Resources
 - USDOJ, COPS Office
 - National Police Foundation
 - SME Video: Community Policing
- d. What After-Action is and When to Use it
 - After-Action Reviews are Learning Tools
 - SME Video: Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses through AARs
 - Explore Additional Resources
 - Center for Mass Violence Response Studies
 - Averted School Violence
 - LEO Near Miss Reporting System
 - Critical Incident Response Library
- e. Evolution of the After-Action Process
 - U.S. Military
 - Public sector industries
 - Private sector companies
 - Evolving public safety threats
- f. After-Action Reviews & Officer Wellness
 - SME Video: Managing Stress after Critical Incidents
 - Post-Traumatic Stress
- g. Knowledge Check Questions

Module Two: Overview of After-Action Reporting Process

This module provides an overview of the dynamic process of conducting after-action reviews, whether they are used as a simple post-event conversation or if they are the result of a complex incident requiring an in-depth review and written report. Participants consider a variety of factors involved with determining the circumstances in which an after-action may be necessary and useful, as well as a range of options for how the after-action process may be implemented, depending on those unique factors. The module focuses on how the practice can be most beneficial when integrated into the daily operations of an organization, regardless of the complexity or formality of the review and report.

Learning Objectives

1. Explore the after-action review process.
2. Identify ways to determine the type of review to conduct.
3. Distinguish informal reviews from formal reviews.
4. Explore the supervisor's role in implementing the AAR process.
5. Identify qualifications for an independent review team.

Instructional Strategies

This module is delivered through eLearning components that include audio narration, visual vignettes, interviews with subject-matter experts and practitioners, on-screen text, interactive activities and Test Your Knowledge questions.

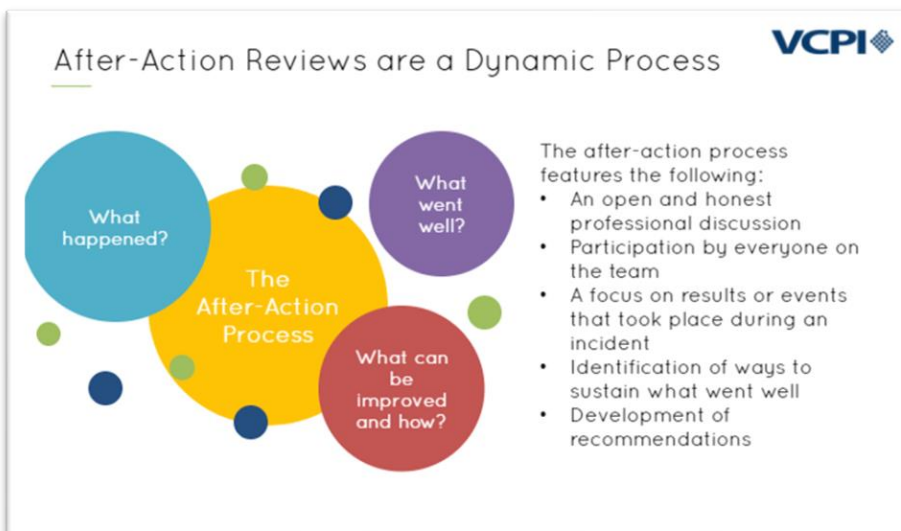


Figure 2. In Module Two, participants learn about the dynamic after-action process.

Content Outline

Module Two: Overview of After-Action Reporting Process

a. After-Action Reviews are a Dynamic Process

- What Happened?
- What Went Well?
- What Can Be Improved and How?
- SME Video: Making AARs Part of Organizational Culture

b. Determining the Type of After-Action Review to Conduct

- Tiered Approach Based on Scope of Event
- After-Action Process Continuum: Informal to Formal
- SME Video: Informal and Formal AARs
- Explore Additional Resources
 - Determining Scale
 - Defining Purpose and Scope
 - Establishing Initial Objectives
 - Deciding whether AAR will be informal or formal
 - Determining how, with whom, and when the outcomes of the AAR will be shared
- Determining whether AAR will be conducted internally, by an external entity, or both

c. Initiating an After-Action Review

- Conducting an After-Action Review Meeting

- SME Video: Supervisors' Role in AARs
- Explore Additional Resources
 - Working with an External Entity to Conduct an AAR
 - Best Practices of Independent AAR Teams/Consultants

d. Knowledge Check Questions

Module Three: Writing the After-Action Report

This module provides an overview of the after-action report-writing process. Participant will explore strategies and guidance on effectively organizing, documenting and communicating the findings of an after-action review.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the role of comprehensive, well-written reports in the after-action process.
2. Examine fundamental components of written after-action reports.
3. Explore published reports of incident reviews.

Instructional Strategies

This module is delivered through eLearning components that include audio narration, visual vignettes, interviews with subject-matter experts and practitioners, on-screen text, interactive activities and Test Your Knowledge questions.

Let's Explore Additional Resources

VCPI

The National Police Foundation's Critical Incident Review Library (available by clicking the resources tab above or the button below) is an online clearinghouse where you can read the published after-action reports made available following many high-profile critical incidents from the past 30 years.

Frank Straub, Ph.D. Director
Center for Police Workforce Research, National Police Foundation

Click here to visit the National Police Foundation's Critical Incident Review Library

Figure 3. In Module Three, participants explore a library of published critical incident reviews.

Content Outline

Module Three: Writing the After-Action Report

- a. SME Video: Fundamentals of a Written AAR
- b. Explore Additional Resources

- Background and Methodology
- Incident and Response Description
- Key Areas of Focus
- Promising Practices, Lessons Learned and Recommendations
- c. Communicating Findings in Written Reports
 - Executive Summary
 - Introduction
 - Timeline
 - Overview of Incidents
 - Analysis of Capabilities
 - Conclusion
- d. Explore Additional Resources
 - National Police Foundation's Critical Incident Review Library
- e. Knowledge Check Question

Module Four: Summary and Practical After-Action Tips

This module serves as a cumulative summary of key concepts covered throughout the course and provides insights on implementing after-action reviews as a part of an organization's daily operations. Participants consider these concepts as they explore the potential impact the after-action review and reporting process can have on their own well-being, the effectiveness of their organization, and the national public safety community.

Learning Objectives

1. Review the principles of community policing.
2. Review the fundamental concepts of the after-action review process.
2. Consider the whole-community benefits of implementing after action reviews and reporting.

Instructional Strategies

This module is delivered through eLearning components that include audio narration, visual vignettes, on-screen text, and interactive activities.



Figure 4. In Module Four, participants review key concepts covered throughout the course to reinforce learning.

Content Outline

Module Four: Summary and Practical After-Action Tips

a. After-Action Review and Reporting: Final Considerations

b. After-Actions Have National Impact

- Transparency
- Accountability and Commitment to Learning
- Dignitaries and Elected Leaders
- Officer Safety and Equipment
- Adaptation to the Evolving Threat Environment
- Planning, Preparation, Policy and Procedure
- Bringing Closure