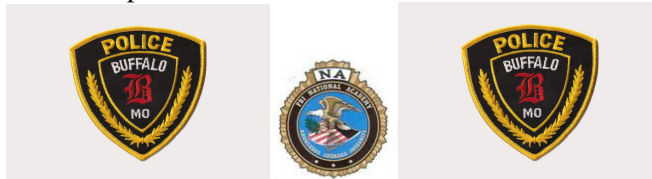


# *Buffalo Police Department*

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FBINAA 172<sup>nd</sup> SESSION

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## **POLICE OFFICER -- FRIEND OR FOE?**

When you're driving down the highway and you see a police car with lights flashing and a vehicle pulled over, do you think "Why isn't that cop out catching the criminals"?

Police officers, like other employees, are expected to perform their job functions. Most all occupations are subject to personnel evaluations. Imagine yourself as a member of a Police Commission, where your job is to evaluate a police officer. How would you do this? Let's assume you are a salesman. Your performance evaluation will be based on several factors, most likely including number of contacts, number of sales, dollar amount of sales, and so on....

Your company has a policy that ALL sales are final. You have received information that one of the products that you are selling, let's call it product A, has been rumored to be defective. Your supervisor tells you that there is a big push this month to sell product A. Because you are a company man, you will sell the product, knowing returns will not be allowed. Because your compensation is related to performance, you will be vigorous in your sales approach.

A police officer is doing the same. The majority of police officers out there are good, honest, working men and women. Like any profession, there are some bad apples. They are the ones that give law enforcement a bad image. For the most part, whether they believe in the law or not, they will do their job, as required. Many of the officers try to change laws and/or the ways things are done, but they have a difficult task, as they directly confront the institution that compensates them!

Another point to remember is that police officers are trained and continually reinforced with the thought that speed kills that accidents are caused by speed, and so on... If a police officer tries to fight the system, to change the way laws are enforced, or to question WHY, many times their peers shun them.

I would encourage all the citizens to get to know your police officers. Share with them your thoughts, expose them to different ideas, and intelligently discuss traffic-related views. Let's not try to place blame as to who's at fault. Instead, let's work together to change and/or protect the way we look at things. Who knows, you might even end up friends. Take it from a person who has been in the law enforcement profession for 40 years, we need to work together.

Sam Hartsell  
Chief of Police