



FBI **Law Enforcement** **Bulletin**

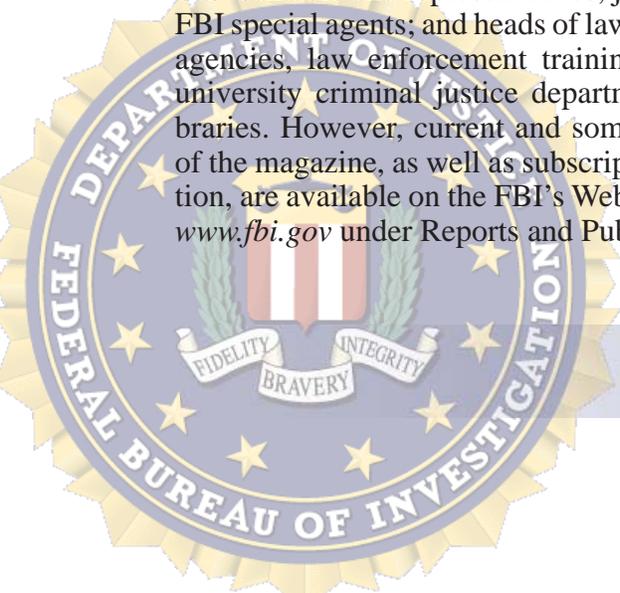
Beginning in 1932 as a list of national fugitives, the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (*LEB*) has grown into a magazine reaching approximately 200,000 readers every month in over 150 countries worldwide. Nearly 45,000 copies of the *LEB* are printed each month, compared with the 5,000 when the publication first appeared.

The *LEB* limits complimentary copies to FBI National Academy graduates currently employed by law enforcement agencies; U.S. attorneys; U.S. senators and representatives; judges; retired FBI special agents; and heads of law enforcement agencies, law enforcement training academies, university criminal justice departments, and libraries. However, current and some back issues of the magazine, as well as subscription information, are available on the FBI's Web site at <http://www.fbi.gov> under Reports and Publications.

GETTING PUBLISHED

The *LEB* seeks articles on a variety of topics of interest to the criminal justice community. Examples include administrative issues, crime problems and solutions, ethics, investigative techniques, leadership and management concerns, personnel and training matters, and police-community relations. To cover the widest spectrum of subjects, the *LEB* generally does not print articles on similar topics within a 12-month period or accept articles previously published or currently under consideration by other magazines. Finally, as a government periodical, it cannot accept articles that advertise a product or service.

The *LEB* judges articles on relevance to the audience, factual accuracy, analysis of the information, structure and logical flow, style and ease of reading, and length. The editorial staff edits all manuscripts for length, clarity, format, and style.



Author Guidelines

Relevance to the Audience

Although the *LEB* is an official publication of the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice, its mission is to provide a forum for exchanging information throughout the criminal justice community. Mid-level to executive managers in diverse agencies, not only within the United States but also from many foreign countries, make up the majority of the readers and represent a wide range of English language comprehension and reading abilities. While some of these administrators work in large departments serving metropolitan areas, most serve in smaller agencies. Also, most of these individuals have a limited amount of time to devote to reading articles, regardless of their level of interest. Therefore, when preparing articles, authors always should consider the *LEB*'s readers and present their material in clear, concise, and understandable terms, keeping these questions firmly in mind.

- Are my readers familiar with my organization or profession?
- How much do my readers know about my topic?
- Will my readers think this information is important?
- What do I want my readers to learn from or do with this information?
- What can I do to make my article easy for my readers to understand?

To ensure that their articles apply to the widest scope of the *LEB*'s readership, authors should write with an appropriate tone, never talking down to their readers, writing over their heads, or using inappropriate humor. Also, authors should use bias-free language, eliminating the generic "he" and avoiding such terms as *manpower* or *man the phones*. They should put people before conditions (e.g., use *offender with paranoid schizophrenia*, not *paranoid schizophrenic*) and watch for sensitive phrases (e.g., use *developing*

country, not *third-world nation*). Finally, authors should avoid clichés, not only the obvious but other not-so-apparent phrases, such as *in the wake of* or *do more with less*.

Factual Accuracy

Authors should support their articles with accurate, concise, and appropriate details. They should provide their readers with sufficient background information, detailed explanations, and specific examples that illustrate and support their topics. Also, they should limit jargon (i.e., technical or specialized language used among members of a particular group) and provide in-text explanations for any terms that readers might find unfamiliar or confusing. At the same time, authors should tailor their work to meet the editorial style and format of the *LEB*. They should revise research papers, reports, and studies to appeal to the magazine's broad readership.

Authors always should cite the sources they use for these supporting facts. Quoting a source exactly, citing or paraphrasing another individual's work or ideas, and referring to information that generally is not well known require appropriate documentation. Unlike newspapers and other commercial publications that regularly quote experts, the *LEB* prefers to paraphrase speakers, usually without naming them directly, then give credit to these individuals in footnotes.

Analysis of the Information

Along with supplying supporting facts, authors should analyze the information they provide and make appropriate recommendations for its use. Authors should indicate why this information is important to their readers and how it will benefit them. For example, an article on a new shift schedule could include potential benefits, such as cost savings and improved morale. Also, authors should examine their articles for any missing material or confusing elements and provide the necessary clarification. The *LEB*



recommends that authors have a subject-matter expert, a grammarian, and someone unfamiliar with the topic read their articles to determine if any unanswered questions remain. Authors also should try reading their articles out loud to help uncover problem areas.

Structure and Logical Flow

Articles on worthwhile topics but without organization or a unifying theme generally do not receive favorable consideration. Often, these problems stem from the same source: the writer has not developed a central thesis to guide the presentation. To determine a central thesis, authors should answer four questions.

- 1) Why am I writing this?
- 2) Who are my readers?
- 3) What do I want my readers to do?
- 4) Why should my readers care about this?

Answering these questions helps authors focus their thoughts, decide how much information they will require, and tailor their documents to their readers' needs. In turn, these answers will lead authors to their main point or central thesis.

Once they have determined the central thesis, authors should study several issues of the *LEB* to understand how the magazine presents various topics and structures different types of articles. By doing this, authors will learn that they should begin their articles with an intriguing scenario,

interesting statistic, fascinating fact, quotable quote, or some other attention-getting device. Next, they should develop the introduction by explaining the problem or issue to their readers before presenting the solution in the thesis. Authors should indicate what the article is going to say, why this material is important to the readers, and how it will benefit them. Authors should not state what the article is *about* but what they intend to *say* about the topic. *This article describes the experiences of the Laketown Police Department in developing police-oriented cable access programming* indicates the topic of the article but little else. *By developing programming for the local cable access channel, the Laketown Police Department found a way to deliver a wide range of public safety and police-oriented information to a broad cross section of the community* presents a far more powerful and helpful preview of the overall message of the article.

Authors should construct their articles logically. Various strategies exist, such as chronological order or general-to-specific format. If authors think that their readers will be receptive to their topics, they may want to start with a general thesis and then support it with specific facts. However, if readers might resist the subject, authors may want to begin by citing specific evidence before revealing their general arguments.

After determining the structure, authors should make sure that their articles are balanced.



They should not devote too much time to one area at the expense of another. Also, authors should cover opposing points of view, especially for controversial topics.

Finally, authors should end their articles with a strong, carefully planned conclusion. It should wrap up the article without introducing any new information, restate the article's main points, give the readers a sense of completion, and leave a lasting impression.

Style and Ease of Reading

Because the *LEB* reaches a wide audience, authors should maintain a straightforward, direct writing style. They should use concise language to explain even complex ideas or concepts and avoid unnecessary words. For instance, instead of writing *in order to develop an effective response strategy*, authors should write *to respond effectively*. Likewise, authors should use action verbs, limit forms of the verb "to be," and use concrete language. *Citizens were appreciative of the department's efforts in modernizing its dispatching capabilities* reads much better as *Citizens appreciated the department's new dispatching capabilities*. Most important, authors should present their ideas in a positive manner, rather than pointing out only the negative aspects. Berating their readers does little to endear authors or their topics to the very people they wish to reach with their message.

Because of the broad readership representing diverse components of the criminal justice system, the *LEB* prefers to publish articles in the third person using active voice. Third person presents information to a neutral audience from a neutral vantage point (e.g., *The evening shift commander organized a Neighborhood Watch meeting.*). Second person addresses the audience as *you*, either stated (e.g., *You do not need to be an accountant to become a good white-collar crime investigator.*) or implied (e.g., *After a critical incident, be prepared to respond to media requests for information.*). First person relates information from a personal vantage point (e.g., *I conducted a study on the department's new shift schedule.*).

Active voice conveys information in a direct and powerful way and avoids misunderstandings. *Transit police administrators developed contingency plans for responding to biochemical assaults on mass transit systems* clearly shows who did what. *Contingency plans were developed for responding to biochemical assaults on mass transit systems* has the subject (*contingency plans*) being acted upon by an unknown force. Using active voice clarifies the information.

To further enhance readability, authors should avoid long sentences and paragraphs. Effective sentences generally should contain fewer than 30 words and comprise no more than 2 lines. Authors should keep paragraphs fairly short but vary their length to maintain their readers' attention.

Authors also need to link paragraphs together to help their readers follow the flow of the article. Unrelated ideas interrupt and confuse readers. Therefore, authors should use transitional words and phrases to guide their readers through the paragraphs and make the relationship between ideas clear.

Finally, authors should use headings to break several paragraphs into logical sections and guide readers through the main points of their articles. They should create headings that are brief, informative, relevant, and parallel (i.e., use the same parts of speech). An article on implementing an outside employment policy, for instance, might include such headings as *Identifying a Need, Researching Model Approaches, Organizing Focus Groups, Developing Guidelines, Implementing the Policy, and Measuring Results*.

Length and Format

Feature articles should contain 2,000 to 3,500 words or about 8 to 14 pages, double-spaced. Submissions for specialized departments, such as Police Practice and Case Study, should contain 1,200 to 2,000 words or 5 to 8 pages, double-spaced.

For proper footnote citation format, authors should refer to *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., by Kate L. Turabian. For grammar and style issues, authors should follow *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage*.

SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

Authors may submit a query letter along with a detailed 1- to 2-page outline before writing an article. Although designed to help authors, this process does not guarantee acceptance of any article. Authors also may submit completed manuscripts and will receive notification of the receipt of the material. The *LEB* staff will review queries and articles and advise the authors of acceptance or rejection.

Authors can e-mail or mail a full-face, passport-style photograph of themselves to be used with feature articles and some specialized departments. They also can submit photographs that visually depict their subject matter. If mailing, authors should send duplicate, not original, ones because the magazine does not accept responsibility for damaged or lost photographs. Upon publication, authors receive two complimentary copies of the issue containing their article.

Authors should e-mail query letters or manuscript submissions to the editor at leb@fbiaacademy.edu or mail them to the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia 22135. For additional assistance, authors can contact the *LEB* staff at 703-632-1460 (fax: 703-632-1968).

Tips for Getting Published in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*

- Consider the readers
- Structure the article logically
- Provide supporting facts and details
- Include examples to illustrate points
- Write actively in third person
- Use simple, concrete language
- Limit “to be” verbs
- Use correct tone and bias-free language
- Proofread articles carefully
- Consider the readers

Possible Topics for the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*

- Administrative/personnel issues
- Crime problems and solutions
- Ethics
- Future of policing
- Investigative techniques
- Leadership/management concerns
- Negotiation/interviewing skills
- Police-community relations
- Technology
- Training

