

Pharr Police Department Sees a Big Win Since Adopting RollKall

The south Texas city of Pharr in Hidalgo County lies on the Texas-Mexico border. It has a population of about 85,000, and that number's growing. Pharr is connected by bridge to the Mexican city of Reynosa, Tamaulipas. The nearest metropolitan area is McAllen where agriculture, border-zone factories, and commerce related to the Reynosa port support the local economy.

Prior to being promoted to Assistant Chief in fall 2020, then-Lieutenant Joel Robles worked in special operations where he oversaw the agency's off-duty program. At the time, there were about 35 of 140 officers engaged in off-duty work, providing professional security services primarily to local entertainment venues, shopping centers and construction projects.

Assistant Chief Robles would sit down on Mondays with his spreadsheet. He had a tab for each customer and their needs. With that in front of him, he would text his team to see who was available to work. Texts flew back and forth throughout the day. By day's end, a schedule was set in Excel, with changes made throughout the week as things came up. All told, about 25% of Robles' work week was spent coordinating off-duty detail.

Budget cuts came to Pharr PD, as they have to so many departments. In a time of doing more with less, the time devoted to off-duty coordination seemed especially inefficient. Around the same time, Pharr got a new Chief of Police who brought with him experience using RollKall in a previous department.

Knowing how much time RollKall could save the department, freeing officers to do more police work and less administrative work, Pharr PD went about having discussions with city officials and were able to quickly adopt RollKall. The timing was especially important as the department took on major contracts for off-duty officer's support of Homeland Security and a Texas Department of Transportation bridge building project.



"I was sold as soon as I saw it. RollKall was clearly going to create a huge time savings for me."

Assistant Chief,
Joel Robles

Implementing RollKall

There was some resistance to changing the way off-duty was coordinated. Of course, not all the officers knew that Assistant Chief Robles was spending 25% of his work week juggling spreadsheets. To them, the existing system wasn't broken...why fix it?

Resistance to change didn't last long. Once they downloaded the app and saw what it could do and how easy it was to use, they were sold. Before RollKall, Pharr officers opted in to off-duty details via a show of hands in daily briefings. Being able to see and sign up for jobs from anywhere, anytime was a major positive change.


To get started, the Pharr Police Department coordinators went through training with RollKall. Now, RollKall is part of the department's training for any officers who participate, or want to participate, in off-duty work. In the training, while getting a briefing on the specifics of various details, officers also get a tour of the RollKall app, covering everything from logging in and providing credentials, to accepting assignments and clocking in and out at jobs.

The Big Wins Since Adopting RollKall

Fairness. Coordinators and Command staff make sure everyone's working all different kinds of jobs. Some jobs are harder than others in terms of detail expectations and work environment. Pharr PD command staff wants to know that officers are sharing the burden and there's no "cherry picking" of jobs. With RollKall, it's easy to ensure assignments are evenly distributed, and they can demonstrate that fact if ever called into question. Creating an even playing field was a big driving force behind Chief Harvey's and the city's decision to adopt RollKall.

Fatigue. Making sure officers aren't overworked and fatigued is a very high priority for Pharr command staff. There are strict rules set by the City of Pharr about the hours officers can work in a given day. Furthermore, the department's contracts with Homeland Security and Texas Department of Transportation stipulate a cap on officer hours. This was hard to track without a tool like RollKall.

With officers clocking in and out on the app, and with GPS location, command staff has a very clear picture of hours worked and whereabouts so they know officers are safe and serving the community.



"A top priority for me was ensuring fairness in the way we assign off-duty detail. This was important to Pharr City Council and decision makers too. And it was clear RollKall could give us the insight to achieve that goal."

Chief Andy Harvey

Results



In no time, word spread among the officers about how much easier it was to accept and track off-duty work through RollKall. In just three months, the number of officers participating in off-duty doubled from about 35 to 70, or half the force.

Now on Mondays, the new Pharr PD off-duty coordinator, Sergeant Maximiliano Longoria, spends about 30 minutes loading opportunities into RollKall. He posts off-duty assignments around 10 a.m. and by noon, details are filled. If an officer has a change of plans and can't make it, he or she makes that job available again and someone else can pick it up.

The Road Ahead

Now that more officers are participating and the jobs are easy to coordinate, Pharr PD is able to onboard more customers at a time when businesses are wanting a higher level of security.

With a few months experience coordinating jobs through the platform, Pharr's next goal is to have more customers/local businesses use RKPAY to streamline invoicing and payment. It helps officers get paid more quickly and provides General Liability Insurance for officers, businesses, and police departments.

According to Assistant Chief Robles, the efficiency and time gained from using RollKall for the assignment of off-duty work cannot be understated. **"I wish I knew sooner that this technology existed. It has made a tremendous positive impact on the integrity and efficiency of our off-duty program. I would never go back."**



RollKall is the law enforcement industry's only comprehensive off-duty, extra-duty, and secondary employment solution, bringing transparency to off-duty security by connecting every stakeholder in the process. We help connect our communities by fostering positive relationships among businesses, local police officers, and law enforcement agencies.