



# Pennsylvania State Police

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- ▶ [Department Information](#)
- ▶ [Documents, Brochures and Forms](#)
- ▶ [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ▶ [Press Releases](#)
- ▶ [PSP Bureau and Troop Web Directory](#)
- ▶ [PSP Car Safety Seat Information](#)
- ▶ [PSP Crime Prevention Tips](#)
- ▶ [PSP History And Information](#)
- ▶ [PSP Kids' Zone](#)
- ▶ [PSP Memorial Wall](#)
- ▶ [PSP Personal Safety Tips](#)
- ▶ [PSP Telephone Directory](#)
- ▶ [View as Text-Only](#)
- ▶ [Home](#)

Login

The following article appeared in the Dec. 15, 2004, edition of the Harrisburg Patriot-News. It was written by Col. Jeffrey B. Miller in response to an editorial that appeared in the Patriot-News on Dec. 13, 2004.

By Col. Jeffrey B. Miller  
Commissioner  
Pennsylvania State Police

The Dec. 13 editorial, "Coming Clean," may give your readers the mistaken impression that the Pennsylvania State Police have tried to hide the facts regarding the separate issues of radar unit reliability and incidents of sexual harassment within the ranks. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Under the administration of Gov. Edward G. Rendell, State Police have taken extraordinary steps to tackle these and all other issues openly and aggressively.

Based on statements made by an employee who is suing the Department, the Philadelphia Daily News has written several one-sided and inaccurate stories about State Police use of Decatur Genesis handheld radar units.

The fact is that when troopers in the field raised questions about the possibility of electrical interference affecting the operation of some of the units in certain vehicles, the Department temporarily suspended use of those units in the vehicles out of an abundance of caution. The Department, the manufacturer and Guth Laboratories of Harrisburg conducted tests that determined that the interference had no impact on the accuracy of the units when used as intended by trained troopers. The units were returned to full service.

Around the same time, the Office of Inspector General received an anonymous complaint alleging that the radar units did not work properly. The OIG investigated, reviewed the steps the Department had taken, concluded that it did not have the expertise to test the Genesis units itself and recommended that State Police contract for another independent review of the units. The Department then spent \$18,000 for a study by the University of Pittsburgh School of Engineering.

In his final report, Dr. Marlin H. Mickle of Pitt wrote "it is our opinion that the miscellaneous signals indicated throughout this report are surmounted (overcome) by the reflected signal returning to the radar gun by such an automobile." He added that it is "virtually impossible to automatically separate and remove the spurious sources from influencing the reading except by intelligent operation. That is exactly what is done when the radar gun is used by a trained person." In other words, the radar units work properly when used by trained troopers. The report is posted on the State Police web site, [www.psp.state.pa.us](http://www.psp.state.pa.us).

Under state law, every State Police radar unit in service must be independently tested and certified to be accurate every 60 days. The Department goes beyond the requirements of the law and requires troopers to conduct an internal calibration test and external tuning fork calibration test to confirm accuracy and proper functioning before and after each use.

Clearly, there never has been an attempt by State Police to "cover up" any alleged problems with our radar units because there never has been any evidence that the units don't work properly. In fact, all the evidence shows that the units work as designed.

On the issue of sexual misconduct, I want to stress that the Department never has attempted to hide its attempts to deal with this issue.

On Sept. 8, 2003, the OIG issued a report which made 40 recommendations for improving the way State Police detects and deters sexual misconduct. Following the OIG's report and at my request, Gov. Edward G. Rendell appointed Kroll Inc. to independently monitor the State Police response to the recommendations.

At this time, 38 of the 40 recommendations have been adopted. The remaining two deal with procedures that can't be implemented without the cooperation of the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association, the bargaining unit for our enlisted members. The matters are before an arbitration panel in contract negotiations.

A final report from Kroll is expected in the near future.

State Police welcomes close scrutiny by the media because we pride ourselves on our integrity and history of service to the Commonwealth. We have nothing to hide.

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