

DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 00-12

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE
REPLACES: General Order 98-29
SOP 300.45.00/501.27.00

DATE: February 24, 2000

FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE.

To supplement basic recruit training with a formal Field Training Program, wherein experienced officers provide guidance and education in City geography, department policies and procedures, and other topics to employees-in-training during regular field assignments. Recruit officers will be systematically evaluated during this program to determine their qualifications and/or readiness to assume active and independent patrol duties.

II. DEFINITIONS.

Daily Observation Report - A report to be completed by a Field Training Officer in regard to a recruit officer's daily training experiences and performance.

Field Training - A structured and closely supervised program provided to recruit officers to facilitate the application of skills and knowledge obtained in the academy/classroom to actual performance in on-the-job situations.

Field Training Acknowledgment Form - A form to be utilized by a Field Training Officer, wherein recruit officers are required to acknowledge their receipt of various training information.

Field Training Evaluation Form - A form to be completed by a recruit officer at the conclusion of the Field Training Program to evaluate

their Field Training Officer and the program itself.

Field Training Officer(FTO) - An officer who has been carefully selected and trained to deliver the field training program to recruit officers.

Field Training Summary Report - An evaluation report to be completed by a Field Training Officer in regard to a recruit officer's performance during the field training program.

Supervisor's Summary Report - A report to be completed by a recruit officer's first line supervisor at the conclusion of the recruit's field training program. The summary report will identify a recruit's strengths and weaknesses, and include a written recommendation to release the recruit from field training or retain same for an extended period of time.

Weekly Observation Report - A report to be completed by a Field Training Officer in regard to a recruit officer's weekly training experiences and performance.

III. GENERAL.

Effective March 1, 2000, personnel hired as sworn officers will be considered "in-training" for a period of twelve (12) months from their date of hire if they have successfully completed a course of training at a certified police academy. Sworn personnel who are hired without academy training will be considered "in-training" for twelve (12) months from the date of their graduation from the police academy.

Non-sworn personnel will be considered to be "in-training" for a period of six months from their date of hire.

During the training period, each new employee will be taught necessary job skills, and be regularly evaluated on their ability to perform satisfactorily. This will take the form of quarterly performance evaluations (Refer General Order 99-17A), Mid-Year and Annual Evaluations, and Field Training Evaluation Reports for sworn employees.

All newly hired, sworn employees will be assigned to a Field Training Officer for a period of on-the-job training and evaluation. This requirement shall apply equally to an officer who has just completed academy training, as well as those officers who may have acquired field experience from another law enforcement agency prior to their employment by this department. Such training shall generally last for a period of six to eight weeks; however, same may be extended beyond the eight week period (in two-week increments) if, in the judgment of the Field Training Officer, and the trainee's immediate supervisor and platoon commander, the officer is not deemed ready to function on his/her own. Six weeks shall be the minimum length of time a new employee is assigned to a Field Training Officer.

The Field Training Officer shall instruct the new employee in all areas of performance. These shall include but not be limited to: department policies and procedures, City geography, report writing, criminal investigation, auto accident investigation, officer safety, and City ordinances. During the course of training, the new employee will be given progressively more responsibility over the operation of the patrol vehicle and radio assignments. The performance of the officer-in-training shall be closely monitored by the Field Training Officer, and will be subsequently documented in accordance with Section VIII and IX of this order.

When it is obvious during the training period that an employee is not qualified or suited for the position for which they have been training, the supervisor shall fully document the employee's shortcomings, and forward the information through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. Any decision to terminate the employee shall lie solely with the Chief of Police.

Should an employee fail to complete the training period successfully, yet show promise to become an asset to the department, the "in-training" period may be extended for an additional three months contingent upon the prior approval of the City Manager. However, this will occur only in unusual circumstances.

At the conclusion of the six to eight week training period, final evaluation reports concerning the officer-in-training will be prepared by the Field Training Officer and First Line Supervisor. These shall contain each officer's recommendation to release the recruit to independent patrol duty or retain same in the Field Training Program. The final evaluation reports will be submitted through the chain of command to the appropriate Platoon Commander, at which time it shall be his decision to determine a course of action.

Should the Platoon Commander elect to retain the recruit officer in training, both the Bureau Commander and the Chief of Police shall be notified and apprised of the reasons supporting the decision.

A Personnel Action form should be initiated by the department head at the end of the "in-training" period and forwarded to the personnel office.

Each squad within the Field Operations Bureau should have a fully trained and qualified Field Training Officer available for duty whenever possible.

In the event a Field Training Officer is unavailable for one or more duty shifts, the squad supervisor shall assign a regular patrol officer, who meets the majority of the required qualifications, to serve as a temporary FTO. This officer shall then assume responsibility for training the new recruit and will document the trainee's performance in the same manner as that utilized by the official Field Training Officer.

The department shall compensate each Field Training Officer for their additional responsibilities with compensatory time upon the completion of each training assignment (Refer Department Memorandum 99-1). Requests for such compensation shall be documented in proper form and submitted in accordance with established procedure.

IV. FTO SELECTION PROCESS.

The selection process for Field Training Officers shall generally be a voluntary process, where potential candidates offer their services to fulfill the needs of their individual squad. However, volunteers must possess a minimum of three (3) years active service as a police officer in order to be considered for the position.

Candidates should possess a basic knowledge of the skills and ability required by the position of police officer; a thorough knowledge of department policies, procedures, rules and regulations; extensive knowledge of applicable federal, state, and local laws; the ability to accurately measure and evaluate job performance; the proficiency to write clear and comprehensive police reports; the capability to communicate effectively as an instructor; the personal integrity and professional behavior/appearance necessary to serve as a good role model; the individual aptitude to establish and maintain effective working relationships; and the intelligence and commitment to successfully complete basic Field Officer Training.

Other factors to be considered are the candidate's educational background, maturity, loyalty to the department, and work performance record.

The list of potential candidates shall be reviewed by the Commander of the Field Operations Bureau and, upon consultation with the appropriate Platoon Commander and supervisor, an officer shall be selected to fill the open position. The identity of the newly selected Field Training Officer shall then be forwarded to the Chief of Police and the Administrative Division so that all necessary adjustments may be made in daily assignment logs, etc.

V. SUPERVISION OF FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS.

Field Training Officers shall be directly responsible to their immediate squad supervisor, who will provide an oversight function to the recruit training process. Problem areas shall be brought to the attention of the appropriate Platoon Commander in a timely manner and steps outlined to effect the necessary remedial action.

In those instances where a personality conflict may arise between the Field Training Officer and trainee, the squad supervisor and Platoon Commander shall coordinate the recruit's reassignment to a different training officer.

VI. FTO TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

Field Training Officers shall successfully complete a formal training course at a certified police academy prior to their active participation in the Field Training Program. The St. Louis County and Municipal Police Academy shall generally serve as the institution where instruction in Field Training will be obtained.

Upon completion of initial training, Field Training Officers shall be required to remain current on legal issues, department policies and procedures, and such other topics as may be necessary.

To accomplish this goal, Field Training Officers shall periodically obtain in-service training to ensure that proficiency in their specialty area is maintained.

A. Liaison with Academy Staff.

While contact between Field Training Officers and academy staff members shall of necessity be limited, occasions may arise when, in the interests of furthering training objectives, the Field Training Officer initiates contact with one or more academy instructors or staff to review a trainee's performance. Strengths and weaknesses may be discussed, with special emphasis subsequently placed on those areas where the trainee requires additional work or education. Field Training Officers shall notify their immediate supervisor of any contact with academy personnel and will record such contacts in their Weekly Observation Reports.

VII. ROTATION OF RECRUIT FIELD ASSIGNMENTS.

Field Training Officers shall coordinate field assignments with their immediate supervisors to ensure that recruit officers are regularly exposed to the various patrol areas within the City. Routine tasks will vary according to patrol assignment and shift, and it shall be incumbent upon the Field Training Officers to educate their trainees to the differences.

In those instances where specific expertise and/or experience may be necessary to complete a trainee's introduction to the various operational facets of the department, Field Training Officers may call upon other members of the department staff to instruct the trainee in those matters in which they are familiar.

VIII. EVALUATION OF RECRUIT OFFICERS.

Recruit officers shall be expected to maintain an acceptable level of performance during their field training. Failure to do so could result in an extension of the time the trainee is retained in field training or termination from the department. To ensure that the expected levels of performance are obtained, recruit officers shall be evaluated by means of the following reports:

A. FTO Daily Observation Report.

Completed each day by a Field Training Officer, the report will document the trainee's daily activity and evaluate his/her performance in a multitude of job specific categories (Refer attachment). Each report will be discussed with the trainee, and both the Field Training Officer and recruit will subsequently sign same.

Daily Observation Reports shall be submitted to the shift supervisor on a bi-weekly basis. Following his review, the documents shall be forwarded first to the Platoon and then the Bureau Commander for informational purposes. At the time the review process is completed, the Daily Observation Report will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

B. FTO Weekly Observation Report.

Completed each week by a Field Training Officer, the report will document the trainee's weekly activity and evaluate his/her performance in a multitude of job specific categories (Refer attachment). Each report will be discussed with the trainee, and both the Field Training Officer and recruit will sign same.

Weekly Observation Reports shall be submitted through the chain of command in a manner similar to that for daily evaluation reports. Again, at the conclusion of the review process, the report shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

C. FTO Field Training Summary Report

An evaluation report completed by the Field Training Officer in regard to the trainee's overall performance during field training. The report will be discussed with the trainee, after which time, same will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Bureau Commander. The report will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

D. Field Training Acknowledgment Form.

Incrementally completed as instructional topics are introduced to a trainee, the form will record the recruit's acknowledgment and understanding of each individual area of instruction.

The Field Training Acknowledgment Form will be submitted to the shift supervisor at the conclusion of the Field Training Program and will accompany the FTO's summary report. Following his review, the document shall be forwarded first to the Platoon Commander and then the Bureau Commander. At the time the review process is completed, the document shall be placed in

the employee's personnel file.

E. Supervisor's Field Training Summary Report

An evaluation report completed by the trainee's first line supervisor at the conclusion of the recruit's Field Training Program. This summary will identify a recruit's strengths and weaknesses, and include a written recommendation to release the recruit from field training or extend same for an additional period of time.

IX. EVALUATION OF FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM.

Recruit officers will be required to complete an evaluation report (Refer attachment) in regard to the departmental Field Training Program at the time they have been released to assume independent patrol duty. The evaluation shall be submitted to their immediate supervisor and subsequently forwarded to the Field Operations Bureau Commander. Comments shall be reviewed for validity and applicability, with the intent to incorporate worthwhile suggestions into the Field Training Program as effectively as possible.

X. FTO REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES.

At the conclusion of the established training period, the Field Training Officer shall complete a Summary Evaluation Report (Refer attachment), wherein he/she shall rate the recruit officer on a scale of one to seven in thirty-five separate categories and note specific areas of strength or weakness. In the comments section of the form, the Field Training Officer will make a written recommendation to either release the new officer to independent patrol duty, or to retain same in-training for an extended period of time. This form shall be submitted to the squad supervisor along with the Field Training Acknowledgment Form.

Concurrent with the Field Training Officer's Summary Evaluation Report, the shift supervisor will complete a Supervisor's Evaluation (Refer attachment) of the new employee, concentrating primarily on the recruit officer's strengths and weaknesses. The shift supervisor shall also render a recommendation to release the officer to independent duty or to retain them in field training status.

The packet of reports will be forwarded to the appropriate Platoon commander and ultimately the Bureau Commander. A decision shall be made at that time to either accept the recommendations listed in the reports or, owing to some unusual or mitigating circumstance(s), to request additional information in regard to the trainee's performance.

At the conclusion of the Bureau Commander's review, the Summary Evaluation Report and the Supervisor's Evaluation shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS
Chief of Police

RTM:dld

CALEA Reference: 33.4.3/33.1.4/33.3.1