

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: SPECIAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: SO0101
SUBJECT: Field Training Program		
ISSUE DATE: January 10, 2001	REVISED: 4/14/03, 7/4/05, 7/21/06,	AMENDS/RESCINDS: No Previous
REVISIONS CONTINUED: 5/15/13, 6/8/16, 3/29/19, 01/23/2020, 12/07/23, 5/19/25		DISTRIBUTION: B (sworn members)

I. POLICY:

Newly hired recruit officers shall not be placed into a solo officer position until they have successfully completed the Field Training Program. The goal of the St. Joseph Police Department's Field Training Program is to produce fully trained, competent and qualified police officers. The Field Training Program, commonly referred to as the FTO Program, is designed as a transition from academy training to initial exposure to law enforcement duties. The Field Training Program, in accordance with the Field Training Manual, will provide new officers with practical field training and personal instruction. It will also evaluate their performance in order to determine remedial training needs and assess fitness for continued employment beyond the probationary period.

II. DEFINITIONS:

(See also Department General Order on Additional Duty/Specialized Assignments)

- A. **Field Training Officer:** A collateral duty commonly referred to as "FTO" is that member who directly trains, supervises, and evaluates new officers going through the Field Training Program.
- B. **Field Training Captain:** The FTO Captain who coordinates/supervises the overall activities of the members involved in the Field Training Program.
- C. **Field Training Sergeants:** Commonly referred to as the FTO Sergeants, are those Sergeants who have been designated to assist in scheduling FTO meetings, training, and/or counseling sessions. There shall be one FTO Sergeant on each of the four patrol squads. When absent the FTO Captain will designate one FTO Sergeant as acting in their stead.
- D. **Recruit Officer:** A newly hired officer who is:
 - 1. Currently undergoing academy training for a Missouri P.O.S.T. certificate. Or,
 - 2. Has completed academy training and has not been employed by another law enforcement agency. And,
 - 3. Has not completed the St. Joseph Police Department's Field Training Program.

- E. Lateral Officer:** A newly hired MO P.O.S.T. certified officer with at least one year of police patrol experience with an outside law enforcement agency.
- F. Officer Trainee:** any Lateral Officer or Recruit Officer currently in the Field Training Program.

III. PROCEDURE:

A. Initial Law Enforcement Academy Training:

1. Recruit officers shall successfully graduate from a certified Missouri law enforcement academy prior to engaging in law enforcement duties.
2. The Department requires that the curriculum provided to future recruits be based upon the following:
 - a. Tasks of the most frequent assignments associated with new police officers that complete basic academy training; and
 - b. Missouri Peace Officers Standards and Training Program (P.O.S.T.) requirements for peace officer certification.
3. The Department Training Officer shall serve as the liaison between the Department and the law enforcement academy.
4. Recruits will be evaluated in the academy by a variety of means to measure their competency of basic skills, knowledge, and abilities that are required in order to graduate from the same. These evaluations may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Written exams;
 - b. Practical exams;
 - c. Role playing exercises; and
 - d. Situational exercises.
5. After completion of an academy, the police Training Officer will be responsible for scheduling recruit training in city orientation, department policy and procedures, firearms qualifications, and other programs normally provided prior to completion of the FTO program.

B. Field Training Program (FTO) Description:

1. The program will consist of rotations in which officer trainees are assigned to different Field Training Officers or Field Training Sergeants.
2. Field Training Officers will evaluate trainee performance daily, using evaluation criteria within the FTO program. The trainee will be evaluated on the various required job skills outlined in the FTO Program. A Department training day does not count as an evaluation day.
3. Recruit officers may be required to successfully complete written examinations administered within the program.
4. A minimum acceptable level of performance is necessary before the trainee advances to the next phase of the program.
5. The FTO program is scheduled for 14 weeks.
6. Lateral Officers may qualify for a "Fast Track" option of the St. Joseph Police Department's Field Training Program.
7. Lateral Officers must complete in-house training with the Support Services Division. The Patrol Major will consider the lateral officer's experience and will have the final authority for the "Fast Track" option.

8. Fast Track will consist of an abbreviated training time with a field training officer who will evaluate the skill level of the lateral officer being trained using evaluation criteria within the FTO program. The length of the fast track will be no less than three weeks, however it can last the entire 14 weeks of the training program. Daily forms will be completed during this training period. It is understood that lateral transfers may have a wide range of experience, and some may need more or less time in the program than others. The fast-track option is designed to be flexible to accommodate and adjust to this without compromising the trainee's ability and readiness to function as a fully trained officer. A final assessment will be completed by the Field Training Officer, the Field Training Sergeant, and Field Training Captain prior to releasing a lateral officer from the Fast Track program.
9. If a Trainee is not accepted in Fast Track, the full FTO program of 14 weeks shall be completed.
10. A period of remedial training may be scheduled in addition to the standard 14-week period, when applicable. The maximum amount of time in which a recruit can spend in the FTO program is 16 weeks, unless extenuating circumstances exist or additional time is approved by the Chief of Police. A period of training with the Traffic and/or Detective Division may also be scheduled in addition to the standard duration, when applicable.

C. Field Training Officer Selection:

1. A notice of opening(s) as a Field Training Officer and Field Training Sergeant shall be posted within the department for 10 days. Information regarding the selection process will be placed on the position announcement. The number of Field Training Officers and Field Training Sergeants will be determined by the Patrol Major prior to the beginning of a new calendar year consistent with completion of shift bid. At the end of each calendar year, Field Training Officers and Field Training Sergeants shall "re-apply" for the appointments for the next calendar year. Regardless of application, an operational need exists to maintain a balance of trainers on each squad. Field Training Officers and Field Training Sergeants may be assigned to support operational needs on a particular shift.
2. To be eligible for the position, members must have 2 years of continuous service with the department, or a minimum of 1 year of service with the department and at least 2 years' law enforcement experience with another agency. No less than 1 year completed with the St. Joseph Police Department prior to training a recruit or lateral transfer.
 - a. Officers must have demonstrated superior performance with no suspension, demotion or have been on a performance improvement plan within a year of the closing date of application.
 - b. Officers must have the desire to train others. An assessment of the candidate's qualifications for individualized training, coaching, and evaluating new officers will be conducted.
 - c. Officers must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
3. A candidate's immediate Supervisor(s) will be contacted concerning their positive/negative qualities related to serving as a Field Training Officer.

D. Training:

1. Initial Training may be provided to newly appointed Field Training Officers by the Field Training Commander and/or Field Training Sergeants/Supervisor(s).
2. New Field Training Officers will be provided outside training in applicable areas (i.e. adult learning, training techniques, etc.).
3. Periodic in-service training will be provided to Field Training Officers in those areas where current training is desirable and/or necessary.

E. Supervision of Police Recruits:

1. Police Recruits SHALL consider their Field Training Officer as their immediate Supervisor and SHALL obey all lawful orders from the same. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
2. The formal Chain-of-Command for Officer Trainees while **actively TRAINING IN THE FIELD** is as follows (from lowest level to highest level):
 - a. Officer Trainee
 - b. Field Training Officer;
 - a. **In the absence of the FTO**, Other Patrol Officer, Traffic Officer, and/or Detective;
 - b. Patrol Supervisor, Traffic Supervisor, and/or Detective Supervisor;
 - c. Captain(s);
 - d. Division Major(s);
 - e. Deputy Chief; and
 - f. Chief of Police.
3. When a training/supervising problem develops requiring a counseling session **within** the FTO Program, the FTO shall contact the FTO Sergeant on their shift and/or FTO Major, requesting their presence. Such sessions SHALL be documented. Similar counseling sessions **outside** the FTO Program requiring immediate attention that involves a trainee, their Field Training Officer, and a Shift Supervisor SHALL be documented. The FTO Sergeants and/or FTO Major shall be informed of all such counseling sessions and be provided with a written report of the same.

F. Supervision of Field Training Officers:

1. Field Training Officers are under the immediate supervision of their Shift Supervisors.
2. Shift Supervisors will inform the appropriate FTO Supervisor and/or FTO Captain of any problem(s) concerning the observed performance of a particular Field Training Officer.
3. A Field Training Officer may be relieved of the assignment for good cause under the authority of the Chief of Police.

G. Responsibilities of Field Training Officers:

1. Field Training Officers are responsible for the supervision and evaluation of assigned officer trainees. Additional duties include:
 - a. Counseling trainees on their job performance, including reinforcement and documentation of good performance.
 - b. Identifying and communicating to the FTO Sergeants and/or FTO Major concerning problems with the trainee's job performance;

- c. Making recommendations for remedial training and documenting all such efforts;
- d. Utilizing curricula outlined in the FTO Program's Task/Performance Chart;
- e. Participating in meetings scheduled by the FTO Sergeants /FTO Captain.
- f. Meeting all reporting responsibilities that include completion of the Daily Observation Report(s) and End of Phase Report(s). Daily reports should be completed prior to the end of the FTO's duty shift. The FTO will meet with their trainee prior to the end of shift and explain the ratings for that shift to the trainee;
- g. Writing a final memorandum to the FTO Sergeants/FTO Captain recommending retention or termination of the trainee. Any FTO recommendation on the same MUST be supported by thorough documentation in the Daily Observation Report(s) and Remedial Training Efforts; and remaining fair and objective in the ratings of their trainees.

Paul Luster, Chief of Police

Date