

Law Enforcement Training

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INTRODUCTION:

When you analyze professions where training is of the utmost importance you may consider a nurse, doctor, or an attorney. All of these professions require highly skilled and trained individuals who make critical decisions everyday that could affect life or death and perhaps freedom or imprisonment. However, law enforcement is a profession where the individual's decisions during the course of his/her career could impact all of these areas. Given the right circumstance an officer may need to make a split second decision on whether to take another person's life, because of that individual's actions, or perhaps they may need to take action in order to save a life. In either case proper training is critical. Moreover, they are invested with the power to take away a person's freedom if probable cause exists. So what are the training requirements for someone with so much responsibility and authority?

In this paper we will discuss the training requirements for a new officer who must undergo mandatory training established by a training board. We will also discuss the required training for a chief executive officer and in-service training for those officers who have already completed their basic training requirements. Finally, we will look at a comparison between the training requirements for Indiana and some of our neighboring states.

HISTORY:

The first organized basic law enforcement training course began in 1969 at Indiana Central College which is now the University of Indianapolis. At the end of 1969 the training course was moved to Indiana University in Bloomington where it remained until January, 1975 when it moved to its current location in Plainfield. Prior to the creation of the first course in 1969 there was no required basic training for a police officer in Indiana. Even with the inception of

the new six-week training program, the course remained voluntary for the next three years. It wasn't until 1972 that all sworn law enforcement officers were required to attend a basic course (Indiana Law Enforcement Academy [ILEA], 2009).

As a way to make sure police departments abided by this mandate, any officer who did not complete the mandatory training within 1-year of his/her hire date would lose their arrest powers. However, theoretically a person could be hired and receive no official training for the first year and still work as an officer carrying a firearm and effecting an arrest. With this in mind the requirements were amended requiring all officers hired after July 1, 1993 to receive a minimum of 40 hours of pre-basic training in the fundamentals of criminal law, traffic law and use of force.

As a way to oversee the training requirements for all law enforcement officers the Indiana Legislature enacted Indiana Code 5-2-1 creating mandatory training requirements, and a Law Enforcement Training Board (LETB) to oversee the rules regulating law enforcement training in Indiana.

The (LETB) is comprised of 17 members who are appointed by the governor and who represent a wide-range of professionals from a variety of fields, including; the superintendent of the Indiana state police, a chief of police representing various municipalities, a sheriff representing various counties, journalist, medical professional, education, business and industry, labor, and one elected official representing counties, cities, and towns. The board is required to set the rules that regulate many of the minimum standards which govern law enforcement training requirements.

REQUIREMENTS:

When it comes to training for law enforcement officers there are different requirements depending on the type of officer and in some cases that person's responsibilities or title. As mentioned above, the rules regulating this training is determined by the (LETB). Indiana code 5-2-1-9 lists all of the standards established by the board; some of which include minimum requirements for physical, educational, mental, and moral fitness for potential academy candidates. Another example includes the minimum course of study on human and sexual trafficking for all academy participants which must include:

1. Examination of the human and sexual trafficking laws.
2. Identification of human and sexual trafficking.
3. Communicating with traumatized persons.
4. Therapeutically appropriate investigative techniques.
5. Collaboration with federal law enforcement officials.
6. Rights of and protections afforded to victims.
7. The availability of community resources to assist human and sexual trafficking victims.

Finally, the (LETB) is required to set the minimum training standards for pre-basic, basic law enforcement academy, town marshal basic academy, executive officers, and in-service (Indiana General Assembly, 2009).

As a result of these standards all new officers must undergo a pre-basic course prior to working in a law enforcement capacity, and while waiting for their training at the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, or one of the other six certified training facilities throughout Indiana.

The Indiana Law Enforcement Academy has undergone many changes to arrive at where it is today. Today's academy is a full service training center not only offering basic training but also executive and in-service training.

Currently, with the exception of a few, all new officers begin their law enforcement career by completing a mandatory basic training course which consists of 600 hours of training with instruction in areas such as; criminal law, traffic law, emergency vehicle operations, firearms proficiency, and defensive tactics. Furthermore, in order to graduate officers must also complete instruction in criminal and accident investigations, domestic and sexual assault, crime prevention, and narcotics (ILEA, 2009).

Second, is the Town Marshalls Course which consists of 300 hours of training at the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy and 50 hours of study at home. This course is for police officers working in a town where there is no more than one Marshall and two Deputy Marshalls. Although, a marshal is eligible to attend the regular basic training course it is often times difficult for the town to allow him/her to be away from the job for such a long period.

Third, is the Police Executive Training Course which is an 80 hour training program that all newly appointed Police Chiefs must attend within 6-months of their appointment to the position. This course includes such topics as; liability issues, media relations, policy making, use-of-force, discipline, accounting/administration, emergency vehicle operation, cultural diversity and other department/administrative programs (ILEA, 2009).

Law Enforcement training does not end after the academy. All Indiana law enforcement officers must annually complete twenty-four hours of in-service training that must include topics dealing with 8-hours of mental illness, addiction and disabilities, human trafficking, 2-hours in

firearms, 2-hours in physical tactics/use of force, 2-hours in police vehicle operation, domestic and child abuse, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Furthermore, there are also federal training requirements for National Incident Management Systems (NIMS), Blood borne Pathogens, and Hazardous Materials (ILEA, 2009).

Many departments have their own in-house field training requirements to supplement the training the officer receives at the academy. For instance the Marion Police Department requires all newly hired officers to complete a 14-week field training officer's (FTO) course that calls for the officer to work with a veteran officer who has attended a field training instructor's course and who has shown proficiency in his/her job. This course begins with the new officer being assigned to an (FTO) who will show the officer how to complete paperwork, make a vehicle stop, implement a proper and safe arrest technique, successfully interact with the public, and many other day to day duties.

The new officer will complete four cycles consisting of 3-weeks each on all three shifts. They will return to their original (FTO) in the fourth cycle and then complete 2-weeks on solo patrol with their (FTO) shadowing them. At each cycle the new officer is evaluated by his/her (FTO) with all instruction being documented and placed in the officer's personnel file. If there are any issues where the officer may need remedial training they will stay in the field training program until they are proficient in this area. Once the officer has passed the field training program the (FTO) will make a recommendation to the Uniform Deputy Chief of Police that the officer is allowed to work on his/her own or they need further instruction.

As mentioned earlier many departments have their own field training program, however one aspect of training that may be somewhat unique to the Marion Police Department is what the

new officer must do prior to entering the field training program. All new officers must go through what many may see as unorthodox police training. When a new officer begins their employment with the Marion Police Department they go through an orientation which requires them to interact with the community in ways such as giving a public talk in a school, attending a neighborhood association meeting, working in a mission, and in the county jail. Furthermore, they are introduced to other aspects of criminal justice such as working in the prosecutor and probation departments, and the child advocacy center.

Finally, they learn about other aspects of policing by working in the Dispatch Center, Police Athletic League, and Detective Division. The hope is the new officer will be a more rounded person and more aware of all the resources that are available as he/she are faced with solving problems.

Most agencies are faced with a limited budget which makes it difficult to provide all of the required training, not to mention the previously described training that goes beyond what is required. It is for this reason that many departments train their officers internally by using academy certified instructors. The Marion Police Department currently has 18 officers who are certified instructors with four trained emergency vehicle operators, three defensive tactics instructors, four firearms instructors, and two domestic violence instructors. Because of this arrangement, last year Marion officers received on an average 115 hours of training in 154 in-house classes and 113 classes held outside the department.

Obviously, a police department must function 24 hours a day; therefore another problem exists when it comes to training. How does a department ensure all of the officers receive the mandatory 24 hours of training a year, plus any other training that is required in keeping the

officer's skills up to date? The Marion Police conducts what is call "mid-winter training" in the months of January and February, where all officers receive the state mandated 24 hours of training. This is accomplished by holding training sessions for 6-weeks with 40 hours of training each week. During this period of time the officers receive the mandated training plus 16 hours of in-house training. Normally in-house training includes topics such as; computer refresher courses, identity theft updates, narcotics trends, counterfeiting identification measures, and prosecutor updates.

It is difficult to stay up to date with many of the obstacles facing law enforcement, however with a little creativity it is possible to train.

COMPARISON:

So how does Indiana stack up to those states around us when it comes to training? We will look at the following states and their requirements for basic officer training and any required yearly in-service training.

1. Illinois
2. Kentucky
3. Ohio
4. Michigan

ILLINOIS

Illinois has a similar training board which creates minimum training standards and governs all training related requirements. All law enforcement officers are required to attend a 440-hour basic training course within 6-months of being hired as a full-time officer. I was unable

to locate any information on required annual in-service training for officers. However, Chiefs of Police and Deputy Chiefs are required to receive 20 hours annually of in-service training which must be approved by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, and must be related to law enforcement management, executive development, or ethics (Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board [ILETSB], 2009).

KENTUCKY

Kentucky's board responsible for setting minimum training requirements is called The Justice and Public Safety Cabinet (JPSC). The Department of Criminal Justice Training (DCJP) is responsible for providing all public safety related training and reports to the (JPSC). All Kentucky officers are required to complete a 660 hour basic training course at the Department of Criminal Justice Training. However the website states officers actually receive 768 hours of training. Furthermore, after completing the basic training academy all officers are required to complete 40 hours annually of in-service training which must be approved by the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council (Department of Criminal Justice Training [DCJP], 2009).

OHIO

Ohio created the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) who is responsible for establishing the minimum required courses of training for law enforcement officers throughout Ohio. All Ohio law enforcement officers are required to complete a 550-hour basic training curriculum. Furthermore, after completing the basic training academy all officers are required to complete 24 hours annually of continuing professional training of which 8 hours must be approved by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission [OPOTC], 2009).

MICHIGAN

The State of Michigan created the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) in 1965. The commission's responsibility is to establish mandatory minimum recruitment, along with selection and training standards for entry-level law enforcement officers in the state of Michigan. All law enforcement officers are required to complete a 562-hour basic training course. Furthermore, Michigan requires all officers entering the academy to have at least an Associate's Degree, or they may perform what is called the pre-service "track" option which is designed for those individuals who do not hold a degree and wish to pay their own way through the academy. Candidates pursuing this pathway attend academic classes for the first year then move into the 562-hour basic training course. The website for (MCOLES) contains over 192 pages of certified in-service training, however, I was unable to find any documentation on how many hours are required annually (Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards [MCOLES], 2009).

CONCLUSION:

Given the tremendous amount of responsibility and power that is entrusted to a law enforcement officer it is easy to surmise that quality basic and continuing training is critical in this profession. Historically, in Indiana, official and structured training was unheard of until about 1969. Since then law enforcement has shifted toward more formalized and standardized training requirements for all Indiana law enforcement officers. Compared to neighboring states Indiana stacks up well when it comes to basic academy training and in-service requirements. When comparing Indiana and the other four mid-west states the requirement for basic academy training fall somewhere between 550 and 660 hours. The common requirement for in-service

training is between 24 and 40 hours annually, and only Michigan has a requirement for at least an Associate's Degree before a candidate can enter the academy. It would be interesting to know how this requirement affects the applicant pool, since generally in Indiana the pay for a new officer often discourages those with college degrees from applying, because the likelihood of receiving higher pay in a different profession.

It is difficult to say exactly what the minimum requirement of training should be for a law enforcement officer given the fact there are so many variables to the job. However, there is no doubt Indiana has come a long way from no training requirements prior to 1969 to where we are today. If law enforcement is to provide the quality service that all citizens demand and deserve, then one thing is certain -- continued training after pre-basic and basic academy is a necessity.

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