

NORTH CAROLINA JUSTICE ACADEMY



North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs

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*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	i.
Preface	ii.
Acknowledgments	iii.
References	iv.
I. The Purpose of Field Training Programs	1
II. The Structure of Field Training Programs	1
A. The San Jose, Field Training Officer Model	2
B. The U.S. Department of Justice, Police Training Officer Model	4
III. The Role of Field Training Officers	6
IV. Assessment of Need for Adopting Commission Guidance	7
V. Benchmarking Guidance	9
VI. Topical Areas for Potential Guidance	9
A. Content of Field Training Program	9
B. Exceptions to Participation in Field Training Program	11
C. Program Personnel	12
D. Bias and Conflict of Interest	15
E. Administration and Records	15
VII. Summary	16

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

PREFACE

The Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission has requested the assistance of the North Carolina Justice Academy as it examines the potential for implementing regulations governing Field Training Programs and field training officers in North Carolina. After presenting research to a Commission advisory board, there appears to be a consensus among the board that advisory guidelines instead of regulations will be the most cost-effective and efficient way to ensure that criminal justice training programs conducted in North Carolina adhere to professional standards.

This document will provide an overview to the Commission of the foundations and best practices of well-run Field Training Programs. Much of the content in this document is an accumulation of the best aspects of existing Field Training Programs.

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Whenever used herein, the term of the masculine gender should include a member of either gender, unless the context requires otherwise.

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document is a compilation of the research of law enforcement policies and procedures as well as academic readings from across the law enforcement spectrum. It is based upon the North Carolina Justice Academy's Field Training Officer Program Model Policy. The author, Richard Baric of the North Carolina Justice Academy, relied heavily upon the works of Mr. Glenn F. Kaminsky, Executive Director of the National Association of Field Training Officers, and author of the book, *Field Training Concepts in Criminal Justice Agencies*. In addition, the author relied on the academic writings of Gary Dudley, retired Instructor of the North Carolina Justice Academy.

The author examined the standard operating procedures for field training from the Fayetteville Police Department, the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, the Wilmington Police Department, and various other agencies to help identify best practices.

The author recognizes Sergeant Gregory White and Lieutenant Alex Thompson of the Fayetteville Police Department who assisted in the research and compilation of significant parts of the original Field Training Officer Program Manual published in 2013.

***NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs***

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*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

I. THE PURPOSE OF FIELD TRAINING PROGRAMS

The San Jose Police Department designed the first formal Field Training Officer Program in 1971. Since that initial development, various Field Training Programs have evolved across the United States. While the methods of training and assessment have changed over the decades, the underlying concepts and desired outcomes have not.

The overall goal of a Field Training Program is to introduce probationary law enforcement officers to the realities and responsibilities of law enforcement and to produce members capable of providing service to the public under both non-emergency and emergency conditions. An effective and efficient program uses a standardized training curriculum that is job-related and fair and that objectively evaluates and documents a probationary officer's progress.

A well-constructed Field Training Program has the following functional goals as its foundation:

- To produce a highly trained and positively motivated probationary officer capable of meeting or exceeding standards of performance required by the agency.
- To provide uniform and standardized training to all newly hired probationary officers and to provide remedial training in those areas where a deficiency is identified.
- To build on the foundation of knowledge given in Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET), thereby creating an environment in which the probationary officer may develop new skills, as well as increase proficiency in those acquired in the academic setting.
- To enhance the law enforcement agency's training process by providing on-the-job observation of each probationary officer's performance.
- To establish an appraisal system, which is objective and job-related, utilizing a standardized and systematic approach to measuring the probationary officer's performance.
- To ultimately increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the law enforcement agency by enhancing the climate of professionalism and competency demanded by the ethical standards of law enforcement.

II. THE STRUCTURE OF FIELD TRAINING PROGRAMS

Most Field Training Programs are classified by source. The most commonly used programs across the U.S. are the San Jose Field Training Officer (FTO) Program Model, and the U.S. Department of Justice Police Training Officer (PTO) Program Model.

***NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs***

Some agencies develop a hybrid program using concepts and criteria from either model or criteria developed internally. Modification of a Field Training Program without a task analysis and validated evaluation is not a best practice. Performing a task analysis and scientifically validating any modified Field Training Program better insulates agencies against civil liability for deficient training, negligent training, and disparate impact claims.

Minor structural modifications of a program to accommodate an agency's functions and training needs are acceptable. For example, within a Sheriff's Department, a detention officer and a patrol deputy will perform some common tasks, but also perform tasks unique to their assignment. In these cases, it is necessary to modify the FTO/PTO Program to accommodate unique tasks.

***THE SAN JOSE
FIELD TRAINING OFFICER (FTO) MODEL***

FTO Program History

The San Jose Police Department Field Training Officer Program was established in 1971 to assess probationary officer performance daily. The program was the result of liability incurred in the late 1960s when a post-academy officer, whom senior training officers reported was a very poor driver, was the cause of a fatal traffic accident. Agency management failed to act upon the negative reports and ordered the probationary officer released to solo field patrol shortly before the accident.

FTO Program Structure

Since its inception, the San Jose Model Program has incrementally increased its training periods from 14 weeks (70 workdays), to 18 weeks (90 workdays). Many departments use 12 weeks as a standard, but 14 to 18 weeks is not unusual.

There are four progressive phases to the San Jose Model followed by a "solo" phase. A typical 14-week program consists of:

- **Phase one** - Consists of twenty working days, the first five days are recorded as "*limbo time*" for the probationary officer. The limbo time is not evaluated and allows the probationary officer time to become oriented to the program and setting. During the remainder of phase one, the field training officer evaluates the probationary officer daily as the officer observes and assists the field training officer in performing tasks.
- **Phase two** - Consists of twenty working days, the first day is recorded as "limbo time" for the probationary officer. During the remainder of phase two, a second field training officer evaluates the probationary officer daily as the officer handles more complex tasks while assisting the field training officer.

***NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs***

- **Phase three** - Consists of twenty working days, the first day is recorded as “limbo time” for the probationary officer. During the remainder of phase three, a third field training officer evaluates the probationary officer daily as the officer performs most tasks with minimal assistance from the field training officer.
- **Phase four** - Consists of ten working days of "quasi-solo patrol," during which the phase one field training officer returns to evaluate the probationary officer as if he were on solo patrol.
- **Solo Phase** – Consists of the balance of the 365-day probationary period during which the new officer rides solo and is evaluated every other week by their immediate supervisor, usually a sergeant.

An extension of training may be granted after determining the extension will most likely yield the desired improved performance. Generally, an extension should be limited to no more than fifteen to twenty-five working days.

In many agencies, as the officer nears the end of a probationary period, a formal oral board review of the officer's performance takes place before acceptance as a tenured officer.

FTO Method of Evaluation

The San Jose Field Training Officer Model is based upon the research of San Jose PD psychologist, Dr. Michael D. Roberts, and his associates. They examined three thousand five hundred (3,500) probationary officer evaluation reports and identified ten thousand (10,000) behavioral descriptors utilized to evaluate probationary officers. They then grouped the 10,000 behavioral descriptors into five performance categories. The five performance categories are Appearance, Attitude, Knowledge, Field Performance, and Relationships. The five performance categories encompass thirty-one gradable tasks or "*Behavior Anchors*," traits deemed necessary for police officer success.

Roberts adopted a rating scale of one (1) to seven (7) for each "*Behavior Anchor*." With input from seventy field training officers, he validated the rating criteria of one (1) Extremely Deficient, four (4) Competent, and seven (7) Extremely Proficient as the scale for probationary officer evaluation. The ratings of (1), (4) and (7) were supported by Standard Evaluation Guidelines that describe what attributes or actions must be present to support each rating.

Administration of FTO Program

The San Jose Model uses three levels of probationary officer supervision and evaluation.

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

- The **FTO** has primary responsibility for conducting daily training, observation, evaluation, and supervision of the probationary officer. The FTO completes *Daily Observation Reports* (DORs) to document the probationary officer's performance.
- The **FTO Supervisor** supervises FTOs and oversees each probationary officer under his control. He reviews and approves the Daily Observation Reports.
- The **FTO Coordinator** is the chief administrator who manages the Field Training Officer Program and maintains training records. He develops and institutes processes and procedures for the program as well as reviews and approves any disciplinary action or dismissal proceeding involving a probationary officer.

Application of the FTO Program

Over four thousand law enforcement agencies use the San Jose Model or a modified model. The general success rate for the program consistently exceeds 90%. Personal experiences and examination of Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards data suggest that the use of the FTO Model Program in North Carolina in an unadulterated form is very common.

***THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
POLICE TRAINING OFFICER (PTO) MODEL***

PTO Program History

Between 1999 and 2001 the U. S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office collaborated with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the Reno Police Department to develop an FTO program that was a community-oriented, problem-based alternative to the traditional San Jose Field Training Officer (FTO) Model.

Four hundred police departments and sheriff's offices were surveyed to identify needs related to field training of new officers. The new prototype, implemented in 2001 became the Police Training Officer Program, which was field-tested in North Carolina by the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Police Department. It focused on fifteen core competencies within four performance categories. The four performance categories are Non-Emergency Incident Response, Emergency Incident Response, Patrol Activities, and Criminal Investigation.

PTO Program Structure

The PTO Program has five progressive training phases, two test phases, and one optional orientation phase. A typical fifteen-week program consists of:

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

- **Orientation Phase** – This is optional and scheduled as deemed appropriate by the agency outside of the fifteen-week program.
- **Integration Phase** - Consists of seven working days under the supervision of a Police Training Officer (PTO) who addresses administrative matters with the probationary officer.
- **Phase A** - Consists of twenty-one working days in the field under the supervision of a PTO who focuses on Non-Emergency Incident Response.
- **Phase B** - Consists of twenty-one working days in the field under the supervision of a PTO who focuses on Emergency Incident Responses.
- **Mid-Term Evaluation** - Consists of five working days during which the Police Training Evaluator (PTE) evaluates the new officer.
- **Phase C** - Consists of twenty-one working days in the field under the supervision of a PTO who focuses on Patrol Activities.
- **Phase D** - Consists of twenty-one working days in the field under the supervision of a PTO who focuses on Criminal Investigation.
- **Final Evaluation** - Consists of five working days during which the Police Training Evaluator (PTE) evaluates the new officer.

PTO Method of Evaluation

The core concepts of mentoring, evaluation, and providing feedback to the probationary officers remain consistent with the San Jose Model. However, the evaluation process does not involve the use of Daily Observation Reports, nor a Likert numerical scale. Student assessment takes place utilizing:

- Coaching and Training Reports (CTRs) - Weekly
- Problem-based Learning Exercises (PBDE's) - Each phase
- Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise (NPE) - End of Training
- One week evaluation - Mid-Term
- One week evaluation - End of Training
- Board of Evaluators' (BOE) assessment of probationary officer, if recommended by departmental policy at the end of the training

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

Administration of PTO Program

The PTO Model uses six levels of probationary officer supervision and evaluation.

- The **Police Training Officer (PTO)** has primary responsibility for conducting daily training, observation, evaluation, and supervision of the probationary officer. The PTO compiles *Weekly Coaching & Training Reports (CTRs)* to document the probationary officer's performance. The PTO composes the reports. These reports are not scaled.
- The **Police Training Evaluator (PTE)** with PTO experience administers two, one-week evaluations of the probationary officer. One is mid-term in training, and the second is at the end of the training.
- The **Police Training Supervisor (PTS)** provides daily supervision to the PTO/probationary officer teams and participates in the selection of PTOs.
- The **Board of Evaluators** consists of managers, supervisors, and trainers who review probationary officer and PTO performance as directed.
- The **Program Coordinator** is responsible for facilitating the program daily and maintaining training records.
- The **Program Manager** is the chief administrator who manages the Police Training Officer Program. He develops and institutes processes and procedures for the program as well as reviews and approves any disciplinary action or dismissal proceeding involving a probationary officer.

Application of the PTO Program

Hundreds of law enforcement agencies use the PTO Model. The exact number of agencies using the PTO Model is not tracked but is likely less than 800, or 20% of agencies utilizing a Field Training Program. Personal experiences and examination of Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards data suggest that the use of the PTO Program in North Carolina in an unadulterated form is not common. It is more commonly used as part of a hybrid program.

III. THE ROLE OF FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS

The challenge for any Field Training Program administrator is to ensure the program is properly executed in the field. Legal challenges to the validity of a Field Training Program commonly revolve around the way the program is managed and executed in the field. The most common problem is an FTO's failure to adhere to program guidelines when training and assessing a probationary officer. Using a protocol that gives specific guidance to FTOs, coupled with proper selection, training, and supervision of FTOs

***NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs***

forms the foundation for consistency in a program.

A key element in achieving consistency is the selection of highly qualified field training officers. Selecting field training officers is a primary function of the field training supervisor in conjunction with the field training coordinator. It is incumbent upon these program administrators to choose FTOs carefully.

Many factors, including experience, temperament, and teaching skills, should be taken into consideration when selecting an FTO. The FTO must be trained in and understand the processes and procedures of the program. The FTO must understand the rating instrument (evaluation form) and the rating criteria (Standard Evaluation Guidelines.) The FTOs must be positive role models. This is accomplished by maintaining a professional demeanor and appearance, adhering to rules and regulations, and having a positive attitude toward the agency, training program, the job, and the probationary officer.

Ensuring all FTOs complete a credible field training officer course of instruction is a fundamental element of a successful program.

IV. ASSESSMENT OF NEED FOR ADOPTING COMMISSION GUIDANCE

The initial screening processes used by police administrators to identify or reject police candidates are based upon a variety of criteria that stand alone as predictors of future performance. While successful completion of B.L.E.T. and prior experience suggest that a candidate has a high potential for success, these skills are not yet field-tested within the hiring agency.

Therefore, police administrators must adopt a training program that validates or rejects the initial assessment that a candidate can professionally, effectively, and efficiently perform to standards established by the agency. The foundation for such a proactive training program can be found in a task-based Field Training Program.

The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Pillar 5 - "Training & Education" highlights the need for "implementation of improved Field Training Officer programs."

The Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Standard 33.4.3 mandates the following criteria as part of their law enforcement agency accreditation review:

A written directive establishes a Field Training Program for all newly sworn officers with a curriculum based on tasks of the most frequent assignments with provisions for the following:

- Field training of at least 160 hours for trainees, outside of the required classroom training;

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

- A selection process for field training officers;
- Supervision of field training officers;
- Training and in-service training of field training officers;
- Rotation of recruit field assignments;
- Guidelines for the evaluation of recruits by field training officers; and
- Reporting responsibilities of field training officers.

The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) Model Minimum State Standards for POST Administrators, section 5.0.5, states, “[e]ach state commission should establish a field training officer program of on-the-job training that is also based upon a job task analysis.”

The author has trained hundreds of field training officers in North Carolina over the past several years. Each class begins with an informal survey of how many officers engaged in the field training of a probationary officer before attending the FTO class. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of officers trained by each untrained FTO has varied from one to seven. Under these circumstances, the untrained FTOs rely on their agency’s field training manual, which frequently offers broad-based guidance, but does not address the theories or methodology for performing critical tasks that an FTO must master to be a successful trainer.

A North Carolina law enforcement agency will rarely put an untrained K-9 officer on street duty with a dog, or an untrained sniper on active SWAT Team duty. However, this does not seem to be the case in the area of field training. Using untrained field training officers is not a best practice, does not provide a probationary officer with the best opportunity for success, and may increase civil liability exposure for the FTO, the supervisory staff, and the agency.

After examining various agency field training manuals and interviewing dozens of field training officers, the author finds that there is great variation in field training and assessment methods used across the North Carolina law enforcement community. Modifying a Field Training Program to add needed subject matter or remove task descriptions that are not consistent with the position is not a problem. However, a concern arises when an agency steps outside the program guideline of the San Jose Field Training Officer Program Model, or the U.S. Department of Justice Police Training Officer Program Model Field Training Program. It is possible to create a hybrid program, but the Field Training Program administrator must understand the importance of validating the required trainee tasks, and the validity of the rating scale and assessment methods. Otherwise, the hybrid program will be less effective than commonly used program models.

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

Collectively, throughout the program, evaluations tell a chronological story, category by category. They tell of a probationary officer's successes and failures, improvements, and digressions and of the attempts to manage each of these occurrences by the FTO. These documents are critical in the career of each probationary officer and should be treated as such. Honest and objective evaluations of probationary officers are the best practice and the hallmark of a good Field Training Program.

The totality of research and field experience, as well as the advisory group input, leads the author to suggest that a commission advisory about Field Training Programs, including standards for field training officers, would be a best practice.

V. BENCHMARKING GUIDANCE

Research conducted by the author and by Steven Combs, Director of the Criminal Justice Standards Division, documents that criminal justice education and training standards commissions in at least thirteen states have implemented regulations to mandate an FTO/PTO Program as part of an initial certification process for new municipal and sheriff's law enforcement academy graduates. They also regulate the training and certification of field training officers.

A few states tightly control Field Training Programs through their law enforcement training and education commissions. A tightly controlled Field Training Program encourages consistency in training but may restrict program modification that will address unique agency and community needs. For this reason, overly restrictive regulation that excludes local agency control is not the best practice. Further, it places a heavier administrative and financial burden on small agencies.

In most states, where law enforcement Field Training Programs are regulated, the regulations are geared toward basic program standards but allow agencies to select the model of Field Training Program that meets their specific and unique environment. The training programs for field training officers are regulated, but the task of providing instruction is spread across traditional law enforcement educational institutions. This approach appears to be the best practice.

VI. TOPICAL AREAS FOR POTENTIAL GUIDANCE

Adoption and Content of a Field Training Program

Every North Carolina law enforcement agency under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commissions is advised to adopt and maintain a Field Training Program that meets the following criteria:

1. An agency's Field Training Program should be mandated and adopted in the form of a written policy issued by the Chief or agency chief administrator.

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

2. The Field Training Officer (FTO) Program Model or the Police Training Officer (PTO) Program Model should be used as a template for an agency's program development.
 - Structural modifications of an agency's FTO or PTO Program to accommodate the unique tasks of the agency, or a division of the agency is acceptable.
 - An agency may develop a hybrid program using concepts and criteria from either model or both models. Except as may be necessary to add tasks essential to a position or remove tasks that are not essential to a position, the evaluation format and evaluation rating criteria used for rating a probationary officer should not deviate from the FTO or PTO Programs recommendations and format.
3. An agency's Field Training Program should outline a minimum of 480 hours of probationary officer field training, within the first year of employment, for any probationary officer who, within three years before the date of hire has not been certified as a law enforcement officer in North Carolina.
4. An agency's Field Training Program should outline a minimum of 120 hours of probationary officer training, within the first six months of employment, for any probationary officer who, within three years prior to the date of hire has been certified as a law enforcement officer in North Carolina, and who documents a minimum of 120 active duty hours over that three year period.
5. If applicable, an agency's Field Training Program should outline a minimum of 120 hours of probationary officer training, within the first six months of employment, for any law enforcement officer whose duties are exclusive to processing arrested subjects, detention/correction, or other administrative duties that do not require the probationary law enforcement officer to engage in patrol, investigative or enforcement activities.
 - If, at any time after the initial 120 hours of field training, the law enforcement officer is assigned to engage in patrol, investigative, or enforcement activities, and lacking North Carolina law enforcement officer certification within three years prior to the date of hire by the agency, the officer should undergo the balance of the 480 hour program, (360 hours of field training) within the first six months of assignment to patrol, investigative, or enforcement activities.
6. If applicable, an agency's Field Training Program should outline a minimum of 40 hours of probationary officer training, within the first six months of employment or volunteer service, for any reserve or auxiliary law enforcement officer or special deputy whose duties do not include solo patrol, investigative, or

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

enforcement activities, and who, within three years prior to the date of hire has been certified as a law enforcement officer in North Carolina, and who documents a minimum of 120 active duty hours over that three year period.

7. An agency's Field Training Program should describe the orientation process, training topics, time frames, and training activities that are part of a probationary officer's field training. The orientation process should include a probationary officer's firearms qualification, certification/qualification of other weapons carried on-duty, review, and acknowledgment of the agency's policies and procedures governing the use of force, emergency driving, and policies governing other high-risk activities.
8. An agency's Field Training Program should describe the rating instrument (evaluation forms), and the rating criteria (Standard Evaluation Guidelines) used to assess a probationary officer.
 - A probationary officer in the Field Training Program should be evaluated no less than every forty hours of training.
 - A probationary officer in the Field Training Program should undergo forty hours of comprehensive evaluation to determine their cumulative proficiency mid-way through the program and forty hours of comprehensive evaluation during the final week of the program, or a minimum of eighty hours of comprehensive evaluation at the end of the program.
9. The agency's Field Training Program may describe circumstances under which a probationary officer's training time is extended. The maximum term for a Field Training Program should be established by the agency, but an extension of training should not exceed five weeks (200 hours) for full-time officers, nor 200 hours spread over a maximum of one year for part-time and reserve officers.
10. The agency's Field Training Program should prohibit a probationary officer who has not completed the required hours of field training from engaging in patrol, investigative, or enforcement activities unless they are under the direct supervision of a certified field training officer, or another certified officer. The policy may provide an exception for emergency conditions posing an imminent danger to life or property.

Exceptions to Participation in a Field Training Program

The recommendation for mandatory participation in a Field Training Program described in paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6 should not apply to a duly elected or appointed:

- Sheriff

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

- Chief Deputy Sheriff
- Chief of Police
- Deputy Chief of Police
- Director of Public Safety
- Deputy Director of Public Safety
- Any other management position within a law enforcement agency wherein the Sheriff, Chief of Police, Director of Public Safety, or other agency chief executive has attested that the position primarily performs a management function.

Program Personnel

Every agency's Field Training Program should designate by rank or title at least one sworn full-time law enforcement officer for each of the following positions. In smaller agencies, one officer may perform the duties of Field Training Coordinator and Field Training Supervisor.

1. Field Training Coordinator

Every agency's Field Training Program should designate by rank or title one sworn full-time law enforcement officer as the person who is the agency's field training coordinator and describe in written policy duties of the position.

Duties - The Field Training Coordinator position should be the chief administrator responsible for managing the agency's field training officer program. The Field Training Coordinator should develop and institute processes and procedures for the program, maintain training records, certifications, and other records necessary to document compliance with the program. He should select, manage, and evaluate FTO supervisors and FTOs. He should review and approve any disciplinary action, dismissal proceeding, request to extend training or release to patrol recommendations directed to a probationary officer. He should ensure compliance with program rules and regulations, and act as the program liaison to the agency's chief executive.

Selection - The Field Training Coordinator should hold a position of rank in the agency and have experience as a field training officer, field training supervisor, or field supervisor. The chief executive of the agency or a designated subordinate of rank should select the field training coordinator, taking into consideration the administrative and leadership skills required for the position.

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

Training - A Field Training Coordinator should, within six months of assignment to the position, take and complete a Field Training Officer Coordinator/Supervisor course consisting of at least twenty hours of instruction.

2. Field Training Supervisor

Every agency's Field Training Program should designate by rank or title one or more sworn fulltime law enforcement officers as Field Training Supervisors, and describe in written policy the duties of the position. The Field Training Coordinator, in conjunction with the agency's chief administrator or designee, should determine the number of Field Training Supervisors needed. A general guideline is one Field Training Supervisor for every five to eight active FTOs.

Duties - A Field Training Supervisor should supervise Field Training Officers to ensure compliance with program guidelines. They should oversee the training of each probationary officer under their control, review and approve evaluations submitted by Field Training Officers, and act as a liaison between Field Training Officers and the Field Training Coordinator.

Selection - The Field Training Supervisor should hold a position of rank in the agency and have the authority to supervise and direct the Field Training Officers and the field training process. They should be an experienced Field Training Officer.

Training - A Field Training Supervisor should, within six months of assignment take and complete a Field Training Officer Coordinator/Supervisor course consisting of at least twenty hours of instruction.

3. Field Training Officer

Every agency's Field Training Program should describe in written policy the duties of the position and should describe the criteria for Field Training Officer selection, training and evaluation.

Duties - A Field Training Officer should supervise, train, and mentor the probationary officer assigned to them to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures of the agency. They should oversee daily the training of each probationary officer under their control, following the training program model and protocol. The Field Training Officer should evaluate the trainee no less than every forty hours of training and engage the probationary officer in remedial training, if necessary. They should be good role models and act as a liaison between the probationary officer and the Field Training Supervisor.

Selection - An applicant for a Field Training Officer should meet the following minimum requirements:

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

- Certified in the State of North Carolina as a law enforcement officer, deputy sheriff, or other position with arrest powers;
- Two years (3,800 hours) of uninterrupted full-time service as a sworn member of the agency from their date of hire;

(If there are no qualified applicants with the minimum length of full-time service requirement the agency's field training coordinator may select an officer(s) with more than one year (1,900 hours), but less than two years of uninterrupted service as a sworn member of the agency from their date of hire, and a minimum of one additional year (1,900 hours) full-time law enforcement experience in the year prior to joining their current agency.)

- A positive work history;
- Good verbal and written communication skills;
- Training skills;
- Good appearance; maintaining neat, clean pressed uniforms, well-groomed hair, and shined shoes;
- Leadership ability;
- Commitment to the Field Training Program and the agency; and
- A positive working relationship with peers, supervisors, and the community.

Training – An officer should not be assigned to function as an FTO until they have completed a Field Training Officer course consisting of at least thirty-two (32) hours of instruction.

Evaluation of FTO - A Field Training Supervisor should evaluate the performance of each Field Training Officer under their command on an annual basis and review their evaluation with the affected FTO(s), before submitting the evaluation to the Field Training Coordinator.

A Field Training Supervisor should coordinate a probationary officer's evaluation of each Field Training Officer who participated in the successful training of a probationary officer. The Field Training Supervisor should review the evaluation with the affected FTO(s), before submitting the evaluation to the Field Training Coordinator.

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

Bias and Conflict of Interest

Every agency's Field Training Program should describe a process for the probationary officer to address grievances against a Field Training Officer or Field Training Supervisor.

Sample policy statement –

The potential for bias or prejudice in the Field Training Program must be mitigated. The Field Training Coordinator should investigate any probationary officer accusations of bias or prejudice, and if confirmed, take appropriate action.

The following preemptive actions should be undertaken to ensure that every probationary officer is treated in an unbiased manner:

In agencies of more than twenty patrol officers/patrol deputies, a minimum of two Field Training Officers should be assigned to a probationary officer throughout the training process. When practical, and for optimal results, three Field Training Officers may be used and rotated between the phases of training. The assignment of multiple Field Training Officers is critical to ensuring the probationary officer receives depth and scope of knowledge, skills, and practices.

A Field Training Officer should not be assigned to a probationary officer when a potential or actual conflict of interest is apparent to the Field Training Supervisor or Field Training Coordinator. A conflict of interest is apparent when the Field Training Officer previously or currently has a close personal, familial, financial, dating, or sexual relationship, even if consensual.

- The Field Training Supervisor and Field Training Coordinator should bear joint responsibility for making inquiries of the assigned Field Training Officer to ensure no conflict of interest exists.
- A Field Training Officer who has been assigned a probationary officer where a conflict of interest is apparent should notify his Field Training Supervisor or Field Training Coordinator of the conflict promptly, and in no case later than five days of recognizing the conflict.

Administration and Records

The Field Training Coordinator of each agency should be the administrator designated to endorse, maintain, and secure accurate documentation related to:

- The agency's Field Training Program policies and procedures, including the date of adoption and the dates of structural changes to the program;

*NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission
Recommendations for Law Enforcement Field Training Programs*

- The Field Training Coordinator’s qualifications, training, and certifications;
- The Field Training Supervisor’s qualifications, training, and certifications;
- A Field Training Officer’s qualifications, training, certifications, evaluations, disciplinary action, and history of probationary officers trained; referencing probationary officer’s names and dates of training contact; and
- Probationary officer performance evaluations, training activities, remedial training activities, extension of training, release to solo patrol, and disciplinary action or dismissal.

The documentation may be in the paper, electronic, or digital format.

VII. SUMMARY

The evaluation of potential regulations or advisory guidance governing Field Training Programs in North Carolina required the examination of various facets of the State’s law enforcement landscape. The information presented was composed in a manner intended to recognize the diverse functions of the various agencies. In like manner, the author attempted to accommodate the needs and limited resources of small agencies, which are different from the needs and resources of mid-sized and large agencies. The author also examined the various options available to ensure a minimal level of consistency in the State’s various Field Training Programs.