

# **COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Subject:** FIELD TRAINING OFFICER (FTO) PROGRAM

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## **I. Purpose**

To develop and maintain a comprehensive problem-based field training officer program and to establish guidelines for all field training officers and trainees.

## **II. Statement of Policy**

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to provide its trainees with the resources and quality training needed to fulfill their ever-expanding role as a law enforcement officer.

## **III. Definition**

1. **Problem based field training** — a method of teaching that presents trainees with a real-world, structured problem that has no easy solution. Problem based training encourages the trainee to ask questions, research, and then solve the problem. Problem based training also allows the trainee to focus on the process as well as the content.

## **IV. Program Objectives**

- A. Formulate learning opportunities for the trainee that meet or exceed the training needs of the department.
- B. Develop and enhance the trainee's learning from their regional academy experience through a series of practical application, problem-based exercises.
- C. Allow the trainee monitored independence from the field training officer during the course of their program.
- D. Produce well-rounded, accountable, professional law enforcement officers for the Covington Police Department.
- E. Prepare trainees to use a "problem-solving" approach throughout their career.
- F. Promote the practice and concept of team by employing all available resources.

- G. Through fair and consistent evaluations, the trainee develops the needed knowledge, skill, application, and ability to effectively and professionally police.

**V. Procedures**

- A. Problem-based field training benefits the trainee with practical applications to “patrol situations.” During their program, the trainee will receive one problem-based exercise during each phase of training. The trainee transfers the knowledge gained from a specific problem to additional policing activities. Problem based training supports and encourages the trainee in the process of inquiry through teaching, coaching, and mentoring. The trainee learns to “ask the right questions.” At the end of each phase of training, the trainee presents his or her solutions to the exercise to their field training officer for review.

- B. Characteristics of Real-World Problems (Problem-Based Exercises):

- 1 They are not easily solved.
- 2 The trainee initially lacks essential information that he or she must obtain to solve the problem.
- 3 The trainee must consider a variety of facts and issues.
- 4 The learning occurs through the problem solving.
- 5 The trainee learns a process that he or she can apply to future problems.
- 6 Forces the trainee to confront what they know as well as what they do not know.
- 7 In every instance, the learning will cover a variety of departmental policies and procedures, legal topics, and causes the trainee to utilize individual skills.
- 8 There is no one right answer.
- 9 Forces the trainee to analyze complex problems as they appear in real-world situations.

- C. Core Competencies During Field Training:

1. Police Vehicle Operations
2. Conflict Resolution
3. Use of Force
4. Local Ordinances and State Law
5. Departmental Operating Policies and Procedures
6. Report Writing and Case Management
7. Leadership

8. Problem-Solving
9. Community Specific Concerns
10. Legal Authority (Probable Cause, Articulate Suspicion, Officer-to-Citizen Encounters)
11. Search and Seizure (4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to US Constitution)
12. Officer Safety
13. Communication Skills
14. Orientation
15. Ethics
16. Calls for Service
17. Courtroom Testimony

These core topics are brought together to form a more adapted, well-rounded, accountable trainee.

D. Program Management and Administration

- 1 The field training program is divided into four phases (10 weeks total). The four phases of training reflect the substantive topic areas of policing within Patrol Division. The trainee will be provided with a clear understanding of the learning process, training phases, and evaluation process prior to beginning their program. (See attached FTO program phase guide).
  - a. Phase I – Orientation Phase (4 Weeks)
  - b. Phase II – Patrol Phase (3 Weeks)
  - c. Phase III – Advanced Patrol-AP Phase (2 Weeks)
  - d. Phase IV – Shadow Phase (1 Week)
- 2 Essential Personnel
  - a. The *program manager* is the Patrol Division Commander. He will be responsible for the overall management of the FTO program. The program manager will work in conjunction with the department Training Officer.
  - b. A senior field training officer from Patrol Division will be selected by the program manager and designated as the *program coordinator* to oversee the day to day operation of a trainee's program. The program coordinator maintains all program records and reports during a trainee's program and facilitates and schedules, with the department Training Officer, all field training within Patrol Division.

- c. A *field training officer* is an individual with the primary responsibility for guiding the trainee through their program and learning experience. The field training officer provides daily coaching and training to the trainee, documents the training provided, and answers directly to the program coordinator. The field training officer has the responsibility of ensuring that the objectives of the trainee's program are met.

During the training program, the field training officer will:

1. Provide a positive learning environment for the trainee
2. Act as a role model and mentor
3. Complete all required weekly evaluations and reports
4. Prepare and provide all applicable training material
5. Assist the trainee with their problem based exercises
6. Advise and counsel the trainee as needed
7. Act in accordance with all departmental policies and procedures

### 3. Field Training Officer Requirements

A field training officer must meet the following minimum requirements:

- a. Volunteer for the program.
- b. Two years of service with the department.
- c. Be recommended by their watch commander.
- d. Be approved by the program manager and training officer.
- e. Have had no disciplinary actions within the past 18 months.
- f. Complete a P.O.S.T. approved 40 hour FTO course of instruction.

### 4. Trainee's Responsibilities

The trainee, upon entering their program, is responsible for the following:

- a. Actively engage in problem-based learning.
- b. Accept responsibility for their own learning as it applies to the task assigned.
- c. Take initiative.
- d. Must learn how to properly use all resources available to them inside and outside the department.

- e. Participate in self-evaluation and maintain an openness to constructive criticism.
- f. Complete all assigned tasks on time and as instructed by their field training officer.

***This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.***

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

*Stacey L. Cotton*

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Chief of Police