

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

*ADM Sibley 1/11/18*

January 16, 2018  
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BPC# 17-0479

**TO:** The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Acting Inspector General, Police Commission

**SUBJECT:** OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REVIEW OF THE  
LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT'S FIELD TRAINING OFFICER  
PROGRAM

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

REVIEW and APPROVE the Office of the Inspector General's review of the Los Angeles Police Department's Field Training Officer Program.

**DISCUSSION**

In September 2017, the Los Angeles Police Commission directed the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to examine the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department) process for selecting and training officers who desire to be selected as a Field Training Officer (FTO). The FTO is tasked with training and evaluating probationary officers, who have graduated from the Department's six month Recruit Academy and subsequently assigned to a Geographical Area as a probationary officer who holds the rank of a Police Officer I.

The FTO position is one of the most critical assignments that any officer can undertake during their career. A well-coordinated and closely monitored Field Training Program significantly impacts a probationary officer's professional aptitude, ethics, and values that reflect the commitment to serve the community while protecting the rights of all persons and maintaining public confidence.

The OIG's report will detail the Department's current policy for the selection of FTOs, and outline specific training, as mandated and certified by the Department and Peace Officers Standards and Training.

**E-Copy – Original Signature on File with the Police Commission**

DJANGO SIBLEY  
Acting Inspector General  
Police Commission

**Attachment**

**LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSION**

**REVIEW OF  
THE FIELD TRAINING OFFICER  
PROGRAM**



Conducted by the

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**DJANGO SIBLEY**  
Acting Inspector General

January 16, 2018

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
REVIEW OF THE FIELD TRAINING OFFICER PROGRAM<sup>1</sup>**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

In September 2017, the Board of Police Commissioners (Commission) directed the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to examine the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department or LAPD) process for selecting and training officers who desire to serve as Field Training Officers (FTO). The OIG's report will detail the Department's current policy for the selection of FTOs, and outline specific FTO training, as mandated and certified by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).<sup>2</sup>

The FTO is tasked with training and evaluating officers who have graduated from the Department's Regular Basic Course Academy (Academy) and are subsequently assigned to a Geographical Area as a Police Officer I, hereafter referred to as "probationary officers."<sup>3</sup> Although it is the responsibility of all officers and supervisors to teach probationary officers the necessary skills to perform the duties of a police officer, the FTO position is one of the most critical assignments that any officer can undertake during their career. A well-coordinated and closely monitored Field Training Program (FTP) significantly impacts a probationary officer's professional aptitude, ethics, and values to support the commitment to serve the community while protecting the rights of all persons and maintaining public confidence and is a critical part of the organizational success.<sup>4</sup>

**II. THE PROBATIONARY OFFICER'S TRAINING PHASES**

Field training is the supervised transitional period following Academy graduation, during which time the probationary officer is assigned to the City streets with the full authority of a peace officer.<sup>5</sup> The newly appointed probationary officer cannot be expected to immediately demonstrate the same aptitude and proficiencies of an experienced and tenured police officer.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the probationary officer is trained in patrol operations for a 12-month evaluation period.

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<sup>1</sup> This review and report was completed by the OIG Special Investigations & Compliance Section.

<sup>2</sup> The OIG did not research the alignment of the Academy training with the FTO Training, or the desired outcomes of both. A supplemental report would research whether objective variables serve as the backbone for the evaluation of probationary officers, as well as FTOs, and the efficacy of the Field Training Program.

<sup>3</sup> Per the LAPD Field Training Manual, October 2017, page 12, a probationary officer, who holds the rank of Police Officer I, generally has a one year probationary period, while being formally trained to demonstrate proficiencies in 30 POST categories, as enumerated in the Standardized Evaluation Guidelines.

<sup>4</sup> The LAPD's FTP exceeds the POST requirement of 10 weeks (Regulation 1004 (a)(1)).

<sup>5</sup> California Penal Code § 830.1.

<sup>6</sup> Training Manual, *supra* note 3, page 17: a "tenured" Police Officer II, is one "who has completed probation."

The probationary officer must complete three phases of training and evaluation before promoting to Police Officer II.<sup>7</sup>

1. Phase I is the six-month Academy.
2. Phase II is the first 24 weeks of the Structured Field Training Program Period (SFTPP), when the probationary officer shall be assigned to an FTO.<sup>8</sup>
3. Phase III is a 28-week Final Probationary Period (FPP), when the probationary officer may be assigned to an FTO or a tenured police officer.<sup>9</sup>

### III. FTO SELECTION, TRAINING, AND DESELECTION

Department policy and the Field Training Manual states all sworn personnel who desire to be an FTO must meet the requirement of three years of service, with two years in a patrol and/or traffic assignment.<sup>10</sup> Per Department policy, an FTO holds the rank of a Police Officer III and has completed the Department's 40-hour FTO Basic Course, conducted by the Field Training Officer Unit (FTOU), Training Division.<sup>11</sup>

#### A. The 40-Hour FTO Basic Course

This course is a multi-faceted survey of Department policy and a pedagogical "systems approach" that first requires the FTO to understand the basic learning principle of "failing forward."<sup>12</sup> Failing forward promotes the concept that it is okay to make mistakes providing one learns from them.<sup>13</sup> The 40-hour course covers 10 areas of instruction.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Since 2016, 595 probationary officers have graduated from the Academy and were assigned to an Area to commence Phases II & III of their field training.

<sup>8</sup> In Phase II, the FTO completes the Probationary Officer Daily Observation Report and Weekly Evaluation Report.

<sup>9</sup> Phase III does not require the Daily and Weekly Evaluation Reports. The field supervisor is required to document once per Deployment Period, on an Employee Comment Sheet (Form 1.77.00), "significant" observations or discussions involving an FPP probationary officer's performance, progress, or training, as an aid to completing the officer's Standards Based Assessment (Form 1.87.00).

<sup>10</sup> Department Manual Volume III, Section 763.85, *Field Training Officer Qualification and Selection/Assignment Requirements*, and Training Manual, *supra* note 3, page 9.

<sup>11</sup> As of October 16, 2017, Training Division reported that there were 513 certified FTOs.

<sup>12</sup> Training Manual, *supra* note 3, page 22: Part II-Duties & Responsibilities: *The Process of Teaching/Evaluation and Remedial Training*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> The 10 areas include: expectations, functions & roles of an FTO; teaching & training skills; leadership; driver awareness and safety; ethics & professionalism; test & scenario development; remediation; intervention techniques; competency evaluation & documentation; and finally, legal & liability issues for FTOs.

At the end of the 40-hour course, the officer must pass a final examination composed of 25 multiple-choice questions. Officers must obtain a minimum score of 80%. Officers are also graded on a situational simulated scenario examination.

The OIG noted that nowhere in the 40-hour course is there guidance to the FTO on *how* to teach or cover the areas of instruction. Although Policy states, “the Department must ensure that FTOs receive adequate training, *including training to be an instructor*,” this expectation is conspicuously omitted from the FTP Manual.<sup>15</sup> The Department agrees, that implicit is the unfounded assumption, that by learning the required areas of instruction, the FTO will have the interpersonal and pedagogical skills to transfer this knowledge to probationary officers.<sup>16</sup>

### **B. The 32-Hour FTO Update Course**

To maintain certification, FTOs must attend the 32-hour FTO Update Course during the three years following appointment. An FTO with prior experience, but who has not worked as an FTO for a period of two or more years, shall also attend and successfully complete either the 40-hour FTO Basic Course or the FTO 32-hour Update Course prior to working with a Phase II probationary officer. Although California POST requires every FTO to attend a minimum 24-hour FTO Update Course, the Department mandates a 32-hour FTO Update Course.<sup>17</sup>

The 32-hour course covers 13 areas of instruction.<sup>18</sup> At the end of the course, the officer is required to pass a final examination composed of 25 multiple-choice questions. Officers must obtain a minimum score of 80%. Officers are also graded on a situational simulated scenario examination.

### **C. FTO Selection & Deselection**

Each FTO applicant must submit a Transfer Applicant Data Sheet and two recent Standards Based Assessment forms.<sup>19</sup> Based on training, experience, and the results of the oral interview, the Area and Bureau Commanding Officers will select the candidate.

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<sup>15</sup> Section 763.85, *supra* note 10.

<sup>16</sup> Police Training and Education, Police Science and Training Bureau.

<sup>17</sup> POST Regulation 1004 (d).

<sup>18</sup> The 13 areas include: review of recruit training; teaching & training skills; evaluation & documentation for FTOs; legal update; driver awareness & safety; remediation & intervention; legal & liability issues; leadership, ethics & professionalism; mental health; fair & impartial policing; LGBTQ cultural competency; use of force update and de-escalation scenarios; and finally, test & scenario development.

<sup>19</sup> LAPD Forms 15.88 & 1.87.00, respectively.

Although the Department reported 513 FTOs were “certified,” the OIG discovered officers had been selected to an FTO position prior to attending the Department-mandated and POST-certified training.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, Commanding Officers must ensure that Supervisory Detectives, Field Supervisors, and Watch Commanders will not perform any supervisory duties until POST training is completed, as required by Department policy.<sup>21</sup> Because the Department recognizes, “the FTO position is one of the most critical functions that any officer can undertake during their career,” the OIG believes officers must be required to complete POST training before being selected to FTO positions.<sup>22</sup>

An FTO may be deselected for acts or behaviors that would have disqualified them from the selection as an FTO, and shall be consistent with the Department’s downgrade and/or administrative transfer procedures. In cases where allegations of Excessive Use of Force, False Arrest, Improper Search & Seizure, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination or Dishonesty are sustained, the Letter of Transmittal shall include either a recommendation to deselect or justification for retention of the FTO.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV. ANCILLARY DUTIES OF THE FTOU

In cases where a probationary officer’s performance and/or behavior demonstrates deficiencies, which are reflected as an “Unsatisfactory” rating on the Probationary Police Officer Weekly Evaluation Report, the FTOU serves as a resource to coordinate remedial training and augment the Field Training Program.<sup>24</sup>

The FTOU also conducts Field Training Program Inspections at the Areas to ensure the designated FTOs complete all reports relative to probationary officers’ performance. Additionally, the FTOU monitors FTP Area Training Coordinators, and the Area Field Supervisors given line responsibility over probationary officers.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The OIG reviewed the POST Certified Course Roster for the FTO 40-Hour Basic Course, dated October 16, 2017, which was attended by 32 LAPD officers. The OIG reviewed the Training Evaluation and Management System II (TEAMS) reports of the foresaid officers who attended the course and discovered that 28 (88%) were denoted under Position Description as “Police Officer FTO” before they attended and completed the FTO Basic Course.

<sup>21</sup> Sections 763.47 – 763.49 (*Detective, Field Supervisor, and Watch Commander Training Requirement*), and POST Course Nos. 1850-004000 & 1850-10822, respectively, *supra* note 10.

<sup>22</sup> Training Manual, *supra* note 3, page 9, *Introduction*.

<sup>23</sup> Department Manual Volume III, Section 763.90, *Field Training Officer Deselection*.

<sup>24</sup> Probationary Police Officer Weekly Evaluation Report (Form 01.78.01). The FTOU can coordinate remedial training at the Training Division facilities in such areas as Firearms, Tactics, Emergency Vehicle Operator’s Course, Report Writing, etc.

<sup>25</sup> Training Manual, *supra* note 3, pages 15 & 27. The Department advised the OIG that FTOU was exploring a centralized digital management system which would afford easier accessibility to review and assess probationary officers’ documented performance.

## V. OIG FINDINGS

During the OIG's review and inspection of the FTO program, there were several areas deserving further evaluation, based upon the OIG's observations and discussions with the Department.

Although the Department reported that any officer acting in the capacity of an FTO must be certified, the OIG's review of the FTOU curriculum determined there was no known method to measure the outcome of the FTO training, which must functionally transfer as "teacher" and "evaluator."<sup>26</sup> Other than passing the multiple choice written examination and a situational simulated scenario based exercise in the Department's FTO Courses, there are no objective variables to measure the efficacy and alignment of the courses with the competencies of the FTOs and their capabilities to teach.

From this review, the OIG opines that, although compartmentalized, the FTO Program and the FTP were mutually exclusive. To that end, further analysis must be focused on the program's capacity to develop effective FTOs, who, in effect, advance competent probationary officers to the rank of Police Officer II. The OIG could not determine whether officers who successfully completed the 40-hour FTO Basic and 32-hour FTO Update Courses, were successful at training and evaluating probationary officers.

The Field Training Manual refers to the FTP as a "systems approach," embracing the "Failing Forward Principle." Adhering to the POST Standardized Evaluation Guidelines "scale value evaluation categories are to be used when rating a probationary officer's behavior in each of the performance categories. It is by these guidelines that program standardization and rating consistency is achieved."<sup>27</sup> As described in the Manual, "The FTO must first get a sense of the difficulty of the [Structured Learning Content] task."

The Department is guided by the POST Field Training Program Guide, which in pertinent part, states, it is incumbent upon the program staff and the FTO to work within acceptable limits, and individualize a training approach for each trainee.<sup>28</sup> The Department agrees that this expectation fundamentally challenges the Department's concentrated effort to "standardize all aspects of field training that fall within each topic/area of performance skills."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> POST FTP Guide (Revised October 2014), Volume 1, *Expectations of Field Training Officers*.

<sup>27</sup> Training Manual, *supra* note 3, page 69: *Standardized Evaluation Guidelines*; The Probationary Police Officer Weekly Evaluation Report consists of 5 headings and 30 categories, which are rated: 1-Below Standard; 2-Improvement Needed; 3-Standard; 4-Above Standard, and N/O-Not Observed or NRT-Not Responding to Training.

<sup>28</sup> POST Field Training Program Guide-Volume 1: *Expectation of Field Training Officers*.

<sup>29</sup> Training Manual, *supra* note 3, page 14.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this investigation, the OIG determined the existing Field Training Program is layered with compartmentalized phases and training methodology, evaluating and preparing probationary officers to promote to the rank of a tenured Police Officer II.

To determine, from an empirical standpoint, if the training domains interrelate with FTO training and probationary officer learning, an in-depth environmental scan should be conducted, and the “desired results” substantiated. To this end, the OIG makes the following recommendations:

1. The Commission direct a comprehensive review of the Department’s *Field Training Program*. Such a review would involve, but not limited to, the examination of all training documents and manuals for consistency and alignment with Department policy.
2. The Department transition to centralized digital management software for tracking and accurately documenting all Police Officers I training activities.