



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

**Chapter:** Human Resources

**Section:** 313.4

**Subject:** Career Development

**Topic:** Field Training Program

**Enacted:** 07/30/2015

**Last Review:** 02/01/2022

**Review:** 11/01/2023

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide guidelines to ensure that the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office follows a uniform plan for the training of new deputies assigned to the Field Operations Division, through the use of the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP). Additional guidance is located in the Field Training Officer Manual, which is distributed to each newly promoted Field Training Officer (FTO).

## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office is to train prospective field deputies at the highest level of achievement. The most important step in reaching the agency's goals is to adequately train each employee in compliance with state training mandates for police officers and deputy sheriffs. To do this, competent and knowledgeable training officers must be selected.

To help in this transition, the FTEP provides each probationary deputy with a FTO. It is the duty of the FTO to further instruct the probationary deputy in laws, procedures, and other topics relevant to the job. The probationary deputy's competency will be rated according to established and accepted minimum levels. The training program for newly sworn deputies shall include, at a minimum, instruction in the subject areas contained in the Training Task Guide.

## III. PROCEDURES

### A. Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP)

The FTEP consists of three phases:

1. Phase I consists of twenty four (24) weeks of intense training at the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy. The amount and nature of this training is established and administered by the academy based on standards mandated by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The academy curriculum is diverse and is based on job-task analyses of the most frequent assignments of officers/deputies who complete recruit training, along with specific legal issues related to the performance of the job. Student performance shall be determined by the use of evaluation techniques designed to measure

competency in the required skills, knowledge and abilities. Upon successful completion of Phase I the probationary deputy will be assigned to the FTEP and begin Phase II.

2. Phase II covers the fourteen (14) weeks of field training after completion of the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy. The probationary deputy applies the skills obtained in the classroom into use on patrol. When feasible, the probationary deputy will be assigned to an FTO on each of the two patrol rotations, day, and nights, for a total of 49 working days. While being cycled through the various shifts, the probationary deputy will demonstrate to the FTO that he/she has mastered the basic law enforcement skills. In addition, the probationary deputy will be instructed and tested on Loudoun County Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, rules, and regulations. The probationary deputy will be rated daily on how well he/she utilizes those skills in his/her job performance. Upon completion of this phase of training and having reached an acceptable level of competence, the probationary deputy's performance evaluations will be reviewed by the Field Operations Division Commander or his/her designee, and the Field Training Officers. Upon successful completion of the field training period, the probationary deputy will be placed in Phase III of the FTEP.
3. Phase III is the application phase where the deputy sheriff is assigned to a patrol shift under close supervision of the shift supervisor(s). It is during this period that the deputy will utilize his/her knowledge and training to effectively perform the requirements of the position. It is understood that as a newly trained deputy sheriff, one is not fully knowledgeable in all areas of law enforcement. Shift supervisors and peers will be available for assistance when needed.

NOTE: Newly sworn personnel shall be required to complete Phase I (academy training) prior to routine assignment in any capacity in which the deputy is allowed to carry a firearm, or is in a position to make an arrest, except as a part of the formal FTEP, or under exigent circumstances requiring the emergency deployment of Sheriff's Office personnel. Under such emergency circumstances, recruit personnel shall only be utilized under the direct supervision of an experienced deputy.

#### **B. Previously Sworn Law Enforcement Officers**

Any deputy who is hired and has current certification as a sworn law enforcement officer from an accredited law enforcement academy in Virginia must:

1. Successfully complete the Sheriff's Office firearms familiarization and qualification course, achieving a minimum qualification score of 70%.

2. Be scheduled for the entire FTEP defined in this order as Phase II. If the deputy has successfully completed the Training Task Guide and has proven to the assigned FTO his/her proficiency and knowledge in both agency policies and procedures as well as County Ordinances and Virginia State Code, the FTO may recommend that the deputy be released from the FTEP. The deputy must complete a minimum of four (4) calendar weeks of field training prior to being released.

C. Field Training and Evaluation Program Observation and Documentation

In order to create a clear understanding of the FTEP and to facilitate an efficient and expeditious completion of required training, each probationary deputy will be assigned a Probationary Deputy Manual and a Training Task Guide. The Daily Observation Report (DOR) and all documents required by this program will remain under the control of the FTO. This file is available to the probationary deputy upon request.

Evaluation reports will be numbered sequentially to ensure completeness and facilitate administrative control. All evaluations and documents pertinent to each probationary deputy will be routed through the agency's Training Section, then filed. All reports on each probationary deputy will be kept in an individual deputy training file. The records will be available to all FTOs and the Field Operations Division Commander. Upon completion of the deputy's Field Training, the files will be stored within the training sections archives.

1. Completion of FTO Reports/Forms

The reports/forms required by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office FTEP are contained on all in-vehicle laptop computers and are listed below along with the schedule of submission. Copies of the actual documents used are contained in Appendix A of this General Order.

Report Form	Completion Schedule	Completed by
Report Log	As Needed	FTO
Daily Observation Report	Daily	FTO
DOR Supplements	Daily/as needed	FTO
Patrol Activity Log	Daily	FTO
Training Tasks	During each FTO shift rotation	FTO
Probationary Dep. Self-evaluation	End of each step*	Probationary Deputy

End Step performance Summary Probationary Deputy Status	End of each Step*	FTO
Weekly Summary Report	End of each seven days	FTO
Phase II Completion	End of Phase II	FTO

\*Required at the conclusion of each Step. At the discretion of the FTO, it may be completed weekly.

**D. Selection of Shift Field Training Officers (FTOs)**

When positions for shift field training officers (FTOs) become available, the Sheriff or his/her designee will solicit applicants for these vacancies via memorandum. Interested deputies will be requested to notify the division commander of his/her desire to be considered for appointment as a shift FTO by the due date specified in the memorandum. Notification must be in writing.

All deputies selected must successfully complete the Field Training Officer's course. In addition, deputies selected as shift FTOs shall receive specialized training as directed by the Sheriff prior to being assigned a probationary deputy. Periodic in-service training will be afforded to FTOs in an effort to keep knowledge and skills current within his/her assigned responsibilities.

The Sheriff shall select deputies from the eligibility list as vacancies/opening occur. The list shall remain in effect for no more than two (2) years and may be suspended at any time by the Sheriff.

**E. Duties and Responsibilities of the Field Training Officer**

The Field Training Officer is the essential means by which the goal of the program is achieved. Specifically, the FTO's function is to produce a deputy able to work independently in a safe, skillful, productive, and professional manner.

The FTO has two primary roles: a deputy assuming full patrol responsibility and a deputy who is a trainer of new personnel.

An FTO's patrol responsibilities are clearly defined in other agency publications including the General Order Manual, special orders and directives.

In his/her role as a trainer, the FTO provides on-going instruction in the traditional sense, utilizing innovative and practical techniques. The FTO must have the requisite skills necessary to become a reliable evaluator of a probationer's performance. He/she is required to write daily evaluations of this performance and submit additional documentation as required.

On the probationary deputy's first day, he/she will receive only verbal evaluations and suggestions from the FTO. This "orientation period" is designed to allow the probationary deputy to become familiar with his/her new surroundings without the stress of daily written critiques. Written evaluations will begin the second day of Phase II. Additional orientation periods will take place on the first day of Step II and Step III

On a weekly basis, the FTO shall prepare a verbal/written report on the relative progress of the probationary deputy, presenting this report to his/her supervisor or his/her designee.

During the last two (2) weeks in Phase II, the probationary deputy will operate in a semi-leader capacity. The probationary deputy will operate the police vehicle and carry on all law enforcement activities under the direct supervision of his/her FTO. The FTO shall accompany the probationary deputy during this time but will be in the vehicle only as an observer/evaluator. The FTO shall avoid interfering with the probationary deputy's performance except in emergencies or in situations that have developed beyond the deputy's ability.

At the conclusion of the last step of Phase II when an FTO believes that a probationary deputy has gained sufficient skill and knowledge to operate as a competent patrol deputy, he/she shall make such a recommendation through the FTO Coordinator to the Field Operations Division Commander, or designee. The final decision for a probationary deputy's release to patrol status lies with the Field Operations Division Commander and the Field Training Coordinator.

Finally, the FTO is charged with the responsibility for recommending further training of a probationary deputy if the need exists. In that his/her performance is also subject to evaluation, the FTO's professional and personal conduct should be exemplary. An FTO should possess, and recognize the need for possessing, a higher sense of idealism than that generally found throughout the Sheriff's Office. The FTO understands that the effectiveness, image, and future of the agency are substantially decided by the quality of its personnel.

**F. Field Training Program Coordinator**

The FTEP will come under the direct supervision of the Field Training Program Coordinator. The person selected for this position should possess a strong background in law enforcement training in general.

The Field Training Program Coordinator has the responsibility for monitoring the progress of all deputies who participate in the Field Training Program to ensure that the

training being received is of the highest quality possible. To accomplish this function, the Field Training Program Coordinator will review and maintain all records relating to the probationary deputy's development and performance during Phase II of the training process.

The Field Training Program Coordinator shall continually scrutinize the performance of shift FTOs to ensure that all aspects of the required training is being performed in a timely and efficient manner and that required documentation is submitted according to the schedules established in this General Order. Should deficiencies be noted in either the performance of the probationary deputy or the shift FTO, it is the responsibility of the FTO Coordinator to take appropriate action to correct the problem. This may be accomplished through constructive counseling sessions with the FTO, or with the FTO and the probationary deputy. Should the problem be of such magnitude that the Field Training Program Coordinator feels the agency's best interests are jeopardized, he/she shall immediately notify the Field Operations Division Commander. If the problem is one related to the probationary deputy's performance, a memo outlining performance deficiencies shall be completed by the FTO and forwarded to the Field Operations Division Commander through the Field Training Program Coordinator..

The agency's Training Section supervisor and FTO Training Program Coordinator shall maintain close liaison with the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy staff in order to monitor the progress and knowledge level of recruit deputies while in training. If significant learning problems are being displayed by recruits, the Training Section supervisor shall consult with the academy staff and seek corrective measures. The Training Section supervisor and FTO Training Program Coordinator shall also stay abreast of the curriculum and different programs being offered at the academy to realize a full understanding of the competency level of graduating personnel. Recruit progress and academy curriculum shall be communicated by the agency's NVCJA Instructor and Training Section supervisor to the Field Training Program Coordinator and Field Operation Division FTOs to ensure understanding and to enhance the overall effectiveness of the training being provided to new deputies.

Upon successful completion of the FTEP, the Field Training Program Coordinator shall review all documentation related to the deputy's training and coordinate their release with the Field Operations Division Commander, or designee.

#### **G. Shift Supervisor Responsibility**

To provide the maximum amount of guidance and input into the performance of the probationary deputy and shift FTO, the shift supervisor shall monitor the FTEP. It is the responsibility of each shift supervisor to review and sign off on each Daily Observation

Report as well as to address any pertinent documentation, positive or negative, with the probationary deputy and/or the FTO.

#### H. Stress Management/Referral

The adjustment from civilian life to that of a sworn law enforcement officer is both exciting and challenging for new employees. However, due to the extensive training and high levels of performance expected from new deputies, it can also be extremely stressful and psychologically demanding. For this reason, each person involved in the orientation, training, observation and supervision of new (recruit) personnel, at all levels, shall be constantly aware of conversation, mannerisms and behavior that may indicate that a probationary deputy is having difficulty coping with his/her new duties and lifestyle. If problems are indicated, FTOs, supervisors and academy personnel should consult with the probationary deputy and attempt to identify problem areas and seek remedies. If the problem cannot be rectified through such informal counseling, the employee may be referred to professional psychological counseling through and, in accordance with, Loudoun County Employee Assistance Program (EAP). All such counseling and/or referrals shall be conducted in a discreet and confidential manner.