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|  | HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT General Orders | Policy Number: 401 |
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| | Section: Field Training | Issue Date: 06/05/2023 |
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| VALEAC Standards: TRN.01.02 (a), TRN.01.02 (b), TRN.01.02 (c), TRN.01.02 (d), TRN.01.02 (e), TRN.01.02 (f), TRN.01.02 (g) | | |

A. POLICY AND PURPOSE

The Department recognizes the importance of and its responsibilities to orient, integrate, and field train newly hired, reassigned, or recently promoted sworn officers. Such training, monitoring and feedback are critical to the person's development within the Department, the quality of their performance and their contribution toward realizing the Department's mission. We therefore must have a comprehensive and fully effective Field Training Program (FTP). All training for recruit officers will be done in compliance with state training mandates for police officers. In addition, this agency requires all newly sworn police officers to successfully complete a recruit training program prior to any routine assignment in any capacity in which the officer is allowed to carry a weapon and/or is able to make an arrest, except as part of a formal FTP.

B. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this policy. Responsibility rests with the supervisor to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated. This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

C. DEFINITIONS

Field Training Officer (FTO)

- a. One who provides training in the field, as an on-the-job trainer.
 1. Serves as guide, instructor, mentor/supervisor, and counselor to personnel newly assigned to a position.

2. Provides fundamental orientation on the how, why, where, and when of operating in the new position.
 3. Documents the training and performance of the assigned person.
- b. Works with training supervisor to coordinate, develop, and assure effective and comprehensive training.

Recruit

1. A non-sworn newly hired police officer that is attending basic academy training to obtain state certification.
2. Officers in this phase of training will not become sworn officers until successful completion of their basic training.

Probationary Officer

1. A newly hired police officer assigned to the FTP with an FTO for instruction, oversight, and guidance.

D. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the FTP are:

- a. To enable and assist the recently selected officers in learning how to perform effectively in their new position within the Harrisonburg Police Department.
- b. To clarify departmental performance expectations for the position.
- c. To provide the opportunity for the recruit officer to learn how to apply the knowledge and skills obtained at the Academy, and to learn all applicable legal requirements relevant to the performance of their duties.
- d. To provide an objective assessment of the officer's performance strengths and weaknesses within the new position through the use of evaluation techniques designed to measure competency in the required skills, knowledge and abilities; and
- e. To generate thorough records documenting performance, including details in support of further training, reassignment, or ending the particular assignment or the probationary officer's employment with the Department.

E. FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM (FTP) COMPONENTS

- a. A Field Training Program Coordinator (FTPC) - Operations Lieutenant designated as the FTP supervisor.
- b. A sergeant from each platoon will be assigned to serve as Assistant Team Leaders of the FTP.
- c. Field training for patrol officers
 1. This is the largest component of the FTP. It involves the initial orientation and training of all newly hired police officers.
 2. The minimum length of the program varies depending on previous law enforcement experience.
 3. The main roles include:

- a. The primary FTO, who is the officer centrally responsible for the training of the new patrol officer.
 - b. The secondary FTO who assists the primary FTO with the trainee's training.
4. Field training for Supervisors (Sergeants and Lieutenants)
- a. This component of the FTP is for newly promoted supervisors.
 - b. Coordinated by the Operations Bureau Commander

F. FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

- a) For probationary officers with no prior law enforcement road experience, the program is a minimum of (5) pay cycles or 10 weeks. This equals a minimum of 35 working days in the program.
- b) For probationary officers with prior experience, the program is a minimum of (2) pay cycles. This equals a minimum of 14 workdays in the program.
- c) The minimum training standard listed in #1 above is (2.5) months or "phases" of training. Before moving into the second or third phase, the FTO will discuss the probationary officer's progression with FTPC and FTP Assistant Team Leader.
 - 1. Any concerns noted during the current training phase shall be documented along with any remedial training or actions taken to address or overcome the issues.
 - 2. This process will also be utilized prior to the recruit entering their final evaluation period. If the recruit is still experiencing issues grasping concepts noted by mandated documentation, the recruit should be given up to four additional weeks of evaluation prior to entering his/her final evaluation period.
- d) No recruit will be released prior to completing a minimum length program. However, depending on the probationary officer's response to training, the Operations Bureau Commander (in conjunction with the Chief of Police) can modify this.
- e) Where possible, probationary officers will be assigned to FTO's on different shifts to maximize the training opportunity.
- f) Rehires and officers who are reassigned to patrol after long term non-patrol duties, are subject to entering the FTP. The Operations Bureau Commander in conjunction with the FTPC shall determine the duration of the FTP and the areas to be covered.
- g) At any time during the FTP, the FTPC may recommend to the Operations Bureau Commander to extend or decrease any phase of training based on the probationary officers progress.
- h) Prior to the probationary officer being released for solo-patrol duties, the probationary officer will complete a two-week (7 working days) final evaluation period with their primary FTO. This will be in addition to the minimum training listed #1. The primary FTO will utilize a soft-uniform (outer vest, gun belt, training pants, and polo/sweatshirt) approach to aid the recruit in handling the call for service on their own in its entirety. The primary FTO will refrain from becoming involved in the call for service. If the FTO observed the probationary officer violating policy, infringing upon someone's constitutional rights, violating and local/state/ federal law, the primary FTO shall intervene immediately.
- i) At any time during the FTP, the FTPC may recommend to the Operations Bureau Commander and the Chief of Police, the employment termination of a probationary officer. This shall be based on documented, ongoing problems and in conjunction with the probationary officer's non-responsiveness to training initiatives to overcome the documented deficiency.

- j) At the conclusion of the FTP, the primary FTO and FTP Assistant Team Leaders will make a recommendation to the FTPC for the probationary officer to be released from the program and either given a permanent assignment or have their employment terminated.
 - 1. The release memorandum should be completed by the primary FTO.
 - 2. The FTPC will review the release memorandum and submit a final memorandum to the Operations Bureau Commander and the Chief of Police or his/her designee for approval.

G. FIELD TRAINING OFFICER SELECTION CRITERIA

- a. General Selection Criteria
 - 1. Any officer with at least (2) years of experience may apply to be a Field Training Officer. The selection will be made based on the following criteria:
 - a. Panel Interview
 - b. Satisfactory or above performance evaluation ratings for at least the last year.
 - c. Demonstrated attributes of being responsible, showing maturity, having an outstanding attitude, and showing initiative.
 - d. Having the recommendations of their immediate supervisor and Division Commander.
 - e. Professing a strong desire to mentor, guide, and counsel new officers.
 - f. Maturity, trustworthiness, job knowledge, and communication skills.

H. FIELD TRAINING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Keep the FTPC and FTP Assistant Team Leaders advised of the trainee's progress.
- b. While assigned a probationary officer, if the FTO will be absent from duty, the FTO should make arrangements through the Assistant Team Leader for another FTO to train the trainee.
- c. The FTO serves their assigned recruit/probationary officer in the following five capacities:
 - 1. A role model who exemplifies excellence in carrying out the duties of general law enforcement.
 - 2. A trainer who assesses the training needs of the recruit/probationary officer and applies the training techniques appropriate to meet those needs.
 - 3. An evaluator who gives critical feedback and clear direction to guide the recruit/student officer to a higher level of competence.
 - 4. A supervisor who directs and coordinates training opportunities through law enforcement situations encountered each working day; and
 - 5. A counselor who develops a trusting and open relationship, be perceptive of the recruit's strengths and weaknesses as they relate to job performance and utilize positive performance management techniques to advise the recruit in professional development and career planning.
- d. The FTO shall complete the following evaluations and reports in reference to any trainee assigned to them:
 - 1. Daily Observation Reports (DOR) - Completed in PowerFTO
 - a. Designed with standards for evaluating the performance of the assigned trainee;
 - b. Used to document all duties performed during the tour, both positive and negative, as well as any training conducted by the FTO.

- c. Must be completed by the end of the trainee's tour of duty;
 - d. The DOR's will be reviewed by the FTP Assistant Team Leader or FTPC.
- 2. Miscellaneous Memoranda
 - a. The FTO should complete a memo to document anything out of the ordinary and/or any event that the FTO feels justifies additional documentation.
 - b. These memos are addressed to the FTPC.
- 3. Final Evaluation Recommendation
 - a. This is a report from the primary FTO to the FTPC recommending the trainee's release from the FTP.
 - b. In all cases, the FTO should provide a detailed statement why he/she is making the specific recommendation.

I. TRAINING FOR FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS

- a. All FTOs shall receive in-service training on related procedures and responsibilities
- b. All new FTOs shall successfully complete the minimum training standards established by the Department of Criminal Justice Services prior to being assigned as an FTO (6 VAC 20-280-20). All FTO's must complete a FTO recertification course approved by this department every three years while being assigned to the FTO program (6 VAC 20-280-70).
- c. The curriculum will minimally contain the following:
 - 1. Organizational structure of the Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) FTP;
 - 2. Roles within the FTP, including Primary FTO, Assistant Team Leaders, etc.;
 - 3. Responsibilities of the Training and Professional Development Unit;
 - 4. Training liability issues;
 - 5. The adult learning process;
 - 6. Instructional techniques;
 - 7. Remedial and non-remedial training;
 - 8. Daily observation records and activity logs;
 - 9. Incident averaging and debriefing;
 - 10. Documentation;
 - 11. Retention and Termination;
 - 12. Leadership;
 - 13. Ethics.
- d. If a situation arises where the Department does not have an officer who has completed the minimum training requirements for a FTO, the department may temporarily provide field training with an officer who has been certified as a provisional FTO by the Department of Criminal Justice Services until a fully training FTO is available ([6 VAC 20-280-30](#)).

J. FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Meet with the FTP Assistant Team Leaders regularly on the progress of recruits at the police academy.
- b. Work with FTP Assistant Team Leaders on shift assignments for recruits/probationary officers during the field training process.

- c. Monitor daily observation reports and review weekly status reports on each recruit/probationary officer.
- d. Address equipment/training needs of recruit/student officer when needed.
- e. Review all recruit/probationary officer paperwork prior to final release from the FTP.
- f. Keep Bureau Commander informed of progress of each recruit/probationary officer during their training.
- g. Provide updated training materials to all FTOs.
- h. While the assigned recruit is attending the basic police academy, the FTPC should act as a liaison with the academy staff. The FTPC or his/her designee will visit the academy and student officer to monitor the students progress.
- i. Act as the Human Resources liaison for the recruit/probationary officer.
- j. File all trainee paperwork, i.e., DOR's, weekly status reports, final release forms, and DCJS forms in trainee's training files to be forwarded to the Personnel Development Unit.

K. FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM ASSISTANT TEAM LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Work with the FTPC on recruit/probationary officer training schedules
- b. Once reviewed, these schedules will be sent to the assigned FTO, the trainee, FTPC, and to all patrol
- c. Review daily observation reports on all recruit/student officers.
- d. Review weekly status reports and forward to FTPC and Bureau Commander for review.
- e. Address equipment/training needs of recruit/student officer when needed.
- f. Keep FTPC informed of training progress of each recruit/probationary officer
- g. Review all recruit/probationary officer paperwork prior to final release from the FTP.
- h. Schedule team meetings as needed (one per month minimum)
- i. Provide feedback to FTOs and trainees during the training process.
- j. Keep the FTPC informed of trainee's progress during training.

L. RECRUIT/PROBATIONARY OFFICER ASSIGNMENT

- a. The FTP Coordinator will assign police officer recruits to two FTO's based on phase rotation.
- b. These assignments shall be made as soon as possible to assist the FTO and his or her supervisor with scheduling vacations, special assignments, training, etc.
- c. Sergeant trainee's assignments will be made by the Division Commander to which they are assigned.
- d. To facilitate such scheduling, FTP Coordinator should be notified by the Chief's office as soon as possible once:
 - 1. A police officer recruit is hired
 - 2. A officer is promoted to sergeant
- e. Probationary officers in the FTP should not work on any unsupervised extra duty assignments. Officer recruits may work an extra duty assignment that is considered supervised (their FTO also signs up for the event), after receiving approval from the FTP Assistant Team Leader or FTPC.
- f. Probationary officers may only work limited-supervision assignments (i.e. any police duty without an FTO present) with prior approval from the Operations Bureau Commander.

M. ORGANIZATION/CHAIN OF COMMAND

- a. Chief of Police
- b. Operations Bureau Commander
- c. Field Training Program Coordinator
- d. Field Training Program Assistant Team Leaders
- e. Field Training Officer