



To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

October 18, 2022

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SUBJECT: POLICE RECRUIT TRAINING ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) mandates specific training hours for a Basic Police Officers License in the State of Texas. This informal report responds to a City Council request by providing information about the mandated training hours, a brief course description of training related to civil rights and diversity, and additional courses of instruction related to these important topics. This report also includes additional FWPDP training hours, non-traditional training hours to enhance and strengthen community relationships, and minimum qualifications to instruct at the Academy.

What is TCOLE?

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement is the regulatory state agency that establishes and enforces standards to ensure the people of Texas are served by highly trained and ethical law enforcement, corrections, and telecommunications personnel. TCOLE establishes minimum standards relating to competence and reliability, including education, training, physical, mental, and moral standards, for licensing as an officer, county jailer, or public security officer. TCOLE mandates and dictates 720 hours to obtain a Basic Peace Officers License in the State of Texas.

TCOLE Mandated Training

The FWPDP Academy is currently a 40-week program with 720 hours of education dictated by TCOLE. Our Police Department and Academy staff are committed to ensuring that our recruits are properly trained and equipped prior to becoming commissioned police officers. Therefore, to produce well-versed, professional officers, our Academy expands on most training topics that are required by TCOLE, resulting in more training time than required for each topic. Our Academy provides approximately 800 additional hours above the TCOLE standards, for a combined total of 1520 training hours.

Listed below are the TCOLE-mandated training courses that are most pertinent to the topic of civil rights, diversity and procedural justice. Most of these classes are taught to recruits in the first phase of their training.

- Professionalism and Ethics (12 hours, FWPDP 2 hours): Covers such topics as the concepts and characteristics of professionalism as it applies to law enforcement along with the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, dilemmas in law enforcement and the differences between physical and moral courage.
- Professional Policing (12 hours, FWPDP 0.5 hour): Discusses historical events that influenced policing in the United States, historical development of police service models or styles, the evolution of police service models such as the traditional service model and the community-policing model. Class will also cover state licensing requirements.
- Multiculturalism and Human Relations (8 hours): Defines key concepts and origins of prejudice and discrimination along with the value of and sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others, the public's perceptions of and attitudes toward peace officers and cross-cultural communication and its tie to conflict resolution.
- Racial Profiling (4 hours): Explains the legal, ethical, and moral responsibilities against racial profiling and identifies logical and social arguments against racial profiling. Identifies elements of typical racially motivated traffic stops and the elements of legal contact with drivers and occupants of vehicles. Covers the legislative requirements placed upon law enforcement agencies regarding racial profiling and explains Supreme Court decisions and other court decisions regarding traffic stops and prohibited racial profiling.
- United States and Texas Constitution, Bill of Rights and Criminal Justice System (10 hours, FWPDP 0.5 hour): Course focuses on Amendments 1-10 and 14. Discusses the provisions of the US Constitution, Bill of Rights, the Texas Constitution, and the rights set out in Chapter I of the CCP. Explains the structure and role



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of the Criminal Justice System and identifies the differences between civil/criminal law, civil/criminal courts and their jurisdiction.

- Arrest, Search and Seizure (40 hours, FWPD 40 hours): Discusses legal authorities as they pertain to the role of the peace officer and the rights of citizens regarding arrest. Topics include mere suspicion, reasonable suspicion, probable cause, various terminology and definitions regarding arrest, warrantless search criteria, arrest warrant criteria and bail procedures.
- Force Options Theory (28 hours, FWPD 1 hour): Defines and analyzes the various terms relating to use of force, explains the legal authorities and justifications for the use of force, along with deciding factors in affecting an arrest, communication strategies, and tools for redirecting behavior.
- Civilian Interaction Training (2 hours): Discusses the Community Safety Education Act (SB 30, 85th Regular Session) and its required law enforcement training requirements. This course also covers the Seven Step Violator Contact method, identifies expectations of officer demeanor on traffic stops, explains how uncertainty and ignorance may lead to unnecessary tension during traffic stops, explains how civilians are being taught to act on traffic stops and describes visual or audio recording of traffic stops.
- Verbal Communication / Public Interaction (16 hours, FWPD 1 hour): Explores effective techniques of utilizing verbal communication. This course discusses the critical nature of effective verbal communication and the crucial components of paralinguistic, kinesics, and empathetic techniques. Defines active listening, paraphrasing, empathy and emotional intelligence. Identifies the principles of persuasion and discusses why most arrests are made without physical force.
- De-escalation Strategies (8 hours): Explains the purpose and focus of de-escalation training: to improve the response of officers to incidents that involve persons in crisis, who are behaving erratically, emphasizing that public and officer safety are at the heart of this training process. Discusses the importance of communication skills, active listening and non-verbal communication to attempt to reach voluntary compliance.

In addition to the TCOLE mandated training, FWPD also facilitates training on the following topics:

- LGBTQ+ (2 hours)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (4 hours)
- Traumatic Brain Injury and Dementia (2 hours)
- Agitated Chaotic Event (2 hours)
- Crisis Intervention (40 hours)

The Office of the Police Oversight Monitor also provides one hour of classroom instruction on their history, purpose and initiatives, along with important topics like body-worn camera use, de-escalation, and cultural sensitivity with an emphasis on racial profiling.

Beyond the Classroom

Outside of classroom instruction, we also include activities to encourage recruits to engage with the community, improve their communication skills, and begin to immerse themselves in various cultures. To list a few recent examples, recruits participated in the Opal Lee Freedom Walk, Parade of Lights, July 4th Celebration, helped restore a house in the community that was destroyed in a fire, and built a fence for a family whose child was attacked by a dog. In addition, we created a two-part series titled Community Conversations / Policing in Fort Worth, where community members visit the class and speak to the recruits in a panel forum. The objective is to show the recruits the importance of building legitimacy with the communities we serve and help mend strained relationships. The second part of the series occurs towards the end of the academy, when the recruits leave campus and visit the

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communities discussed in part one. Most recently, recruits visited Café Azul, the Stockyards, Como Rec Center, House of Fades Barbershop, and Artes de la Rosa.

In-Service Training for Officers

Every commissioned officer must complete continuing education training to maintain a state license. The required course topics vary depending on the level of license held (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Master). Each legislative session, the City's Law Department builds a training course titled "Legislative Updates" which covers changes made to state law and which all officers are required to attend. Recently, Law and Police created a two-hour course titled "First Amendment Auditors" taught by Law. This course is mandatory training for all officers and covers topics on freedom of speech, video recording of law enforcement, and definitions of interference with public duties.

Future Training Opportunities

The Police Department will continue working with the Law Department, Diversity and Inclusion, and OPOM to build future training opportunities that relate to civil rights and diversity.

Classes are Taught by TCOLE-Certified/Licensed Instructors

Each instructor at the Academy is a Fort Worth officer selected based on their appointment as a certified TCOLE instructor or their experience as a Subject Matter Expert (SME). To qualify as an SME, an applicant for an instructor proficiency certificate must meet all proficiency requirements, and must have substantial experience in teaching or in the special field or subject area to be taught, to include two years' experience as a peace officer, telecommunicator, or jailer; or a bachelor's degree and two years of teaching experience; or a graduate degree.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Assistant Police Chief Julie Swearingin at Julie.Swearingin@fortworthtexas.gov or 817-392-4247.

David Cooke
City Manager