

**CHAPTER 4**  
**FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS**  
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## CHAPTER 4

### FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS

#### 1. GENERAL.

a. Field Training Officer Characteristics. The Field Training Officer (FTO) is the cornerstone of the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP). As such, judicious selection, training, and retention of FTOs are paramount to the program's success. Field Training Officers take on many roles, all of which must be assumed successfully in order to fulfill the mission of the FTEP. An FTO must exhibit the combined skills of an experienced officer and a patient teacher. In addition, an FTO must also be able to assume the role of a leader, tempering their image as a leader with fairness and empathy for the trainee.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. Field Training Officers performing training and evaluation functions are, at the same time, required to perform the duties of road patrol officers. Sometimes, patrol duties may be modified when an FTO is with a trainee. When an FTO is temporarily required to primarily function as a patrol officer, the FTO must look after the safety of the trainee as well. The ability of an FTO will be tested many times while undertaking the responsibility of training. An FTO shall always be keenly aware they are the primary role model for the trainee, and the style and demeanor projected by them will have a lasting impact on the trainee. It is especially critical for an FTO to treat all people, fellow officers, and departmental staff with courtesy and the utmost respect, as a trainee is particularly apt to assume the interpersonal behavior of the FTO. Above all, an FTO shall be a good, ethical role model at all times. The specific skills and duties of an FTO are discussed below:

a. Leadership. An FTO is responsible for holding trainees accountable by providing fair, honest, and timely feedback. A trainee will make mistakes, and it will be necessary to correct them during the training process. There will be times when a trainee will do something that appears minor, but still requires an explanation and counseling. An FTO should respond to a trainee's mistakes immediately, but patiently. This will help to ensure the result is a learning experience.

b. Teacher. The most obvious function of an FTO is that of a teacher. The teaching experience usually occurs in the field under actual conditions. There may be other times when teaching takes place over an on-shift meal or in a casual conversation. In any event, an FTO spends much of the time teaching, even when it is not apparent.

c. Evaluator. In the role of teacher, an FTO becomes the evaluator. An FTO must be able to determine if learning is taking place and if remedial training is necessary. Evaluation is of paramount importance. Field Training Officers shall properly implement the program's evaluation tools to be effective trainers. Trainee evaluation is documented on a CHP 115A, Daily Observation Report, (refer to Chapter 6, The Daily Observation Report, of this manual) and also through the use of remedial training, discussion, and verbal feedback. It should be kept in mind the principal component of effective evaluation is objectivity, and that is ensured when the program's evaluation tools are properly utilized.

d. Counselor. Field Training Officers will often be placed in the position where they become the problem solving resource for trainees. Normally, the best way to handle this kind of situation is through informal counseling by the FTO. The FTO must be able to help the trainee work through problems. By providing a climate whereby trainees can "talk it out," and by gently guiding them through a problem, an FTO can help a trainee resolve almost any situation.

e. Inspector. Field Training Officers are responsible for inspecting the trainee's uniform and equipment, as well as approving paperwork. Errors and discrepancies may also be brought to the FTO's attention by another FTO or other Area personnel. In these cases, the trainee's FTO shall alert the trainee to the problem for correction.

f. Recommendations. Field Training Officers make the initial recommendation to advance, extend, or terminate trainees. While these recommendations are formalized at the Area FTEP coordinator level and acted upon by the Area commander, it is the responsibility of the FTO to bring the matter into focus through clear documentation of performance and, where applicable, repeated efforts to solve special problems. Decisions made regarding a trainee's status will ultimately be based largely on the recommendations and supporting documentation, or lack thereof, provided by the FTO.

g. Communication. Next to leadership skills, the most important ability required of an FTO is solid communication skills, both written and verbal. To effectively fulfill this mission, it is critical an FTO is able to analyze situations, organize their thoughts, and express themselves in a coherent and grammatically correct fashion.

(1) Field Training Officers submit daily ratings with supporting narrative on trainee performance. This narrative documentation of trainee progress provides the support for decisions to extend trainees, terminate trainees, or allow a successful trainee to complete the program.

(2) Field Training Officers are required to provide concise verbal instruction, direction, and explanation to the trainees assigned to them. In addition, the FTO shall discuss trainee performance during evaluation sessions. Finally,

FTOs shall be able to support recommendations concerning trainee status to Area management.

h. Flexibility. An FTO needs to be flexible and adaptable. It would be impossible to list every aspect of an FTO's job in this manual because the duties and responsibilities change hourly, sometimes even by the minute. Therefore, FTOs must be flexible and able to adapt to meet each new challenge. A great deal of trust and commitment goes with this assignment. Each FTO must exhibit the flexibility to meet the responsibility of the position.

i. Patrol Duty. Field Training Officers are expected to perform routine patrol duties while training. Although patrol duty often adds to the stress of training, it provides an excellent, firsthand opportunity for the trainee to observe real-life incidents and how they are properly handled. Between enforcement activities, the FTOs should discuss each incident, explaining why they took a particular course of action, and what might have occurred under different sets of circumstances.

3. QUALIFICATIONS. Every FTO shall possess the following qualifications:

- a. A Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) basic certificate.
- b. One year of patrol experience.
- c. Successful completion of the Field Training Officer Basic Course.
- d. Supervisor's recommendation.
- e. Compliance with the California Penal Code Section 13515.28 requirements, related to Crisis Intervention Behavioral training.
- f. Many other criteria shall also be considered when choosing qualified applicants. Field Training Officers shall be capable, mature, and willing to put in the time and effort needed to train a new officer. It is advantageous that FTOs are well-rounded and knowledgeable. Field Training Officers shall be team workers who possess the ability to become good teachers and counselors. Many other skills and personal characteristics shall be considered, such as patience, work ethic, leadership, interpersonal skills, written and verbal communication skills, judgment, conduct, integrity, flexibility, and past and present performance. When the Area FTEP coordinator is not familiar with an FTO applicant, recommendations by current and past supervisors should be obtained. In these cases, the Area FTEP coordinator should keep in mind FTOs require unique strengths and desirable characteristics. These strengths and characteristics must be carefully scrutinized during the selection process. Only qualified applicants will be chosen.

#### 4. SELECTION.

a. Selection Factors. In order to meet the minimum specification requirements of the POST FTEP and be eligible to become an FTO, each officer must complete their one-year probationary period. Area commanders will be responsible for ensuring the best possible candidates are selected. As described in paragraph 3. of this chapter, there are many factors to consider. Area FTEP coordinators may identify and recommend selection of candidates for the program's FTO positions to Area commanders. If no officers have expressed interest in vacant FTO positions, the Area commander may assign officers to fill vacant FTO positions.

b. Vacancies. If a vacant FTO position is anticipated, the Area can advertise for qualified officers to apply. In these instances, the Area should utilize the standard selection approach, including recommendations and a standardized interview. The following set of questions provides examples that an Area could use to develop a structured interview.

- (1) What do you see as the role of an FTO?
- (2) Why do you want to become an FTO?
- (3) How would you feel if you were assigned a trainee of a protected group?
- (4) What areas of special education and/or training do you see as necessary in becoming a competent FTO?
- (5) Are you willing to fulfill the possible overtime requirement of an FTO?
- (6) In your opinion, what is the most important quality required of an FTO? Why?

c. Other Considerations. One factor that is often overlooked when considering candidates for FTO positions is the number and type of collateral duties for which FTOs are responsible. Field Training Officers may become burned out because of the workload placed on them. The potential for burnout must be considered, not only when choosing among potential FTOs, but also when assigning trainees to FTOs.

#### 5. TRAINING.

a. Field Training Officer Basic Course. Potential FTOs shall successfully complete a Field Training Officer Basic Course, prior to training new officers. In addition, FTOs shall complete the Field Training Officer Update Module Courses every three years to satisfy the POST recertification requirement.

- (1) After a three-year or longer break in service as an FTO, every officer shall successfully complete the Field Training Officer Basic Course, or the three Field Training Officer Update Module Courses, prior to training new officers.
- (2) The Field Training Officer Basic Course will be offered regionally in the north and south portions of the state, in conjunction with the graduation of each Academy cadet training class.
- (3) The dates and locations of the POST-certified courses will be coordinated by the statewide FTEP coordinator via the Division FTEP coordinators. Because both courses are POST-certified, they must be taught by a POST-certified instructor.

6. COMPENSATION. Field Training Officers must perform their training duties while maintaining their road patrol responsibilities. This added responsibility is recognized and appreciated by the Department. Monetary compensation for FTO assignments is specified in the Unit 5 "Memorandum of Understanding."

7. EVALUATION.

- a. General. As in the case of trainees, the evaluation of FTOs is also a mechanism for monitoring performance and providing feedback. In most instances, evaluation is informal and intended to improve skills and foster personal growth. Occasionally, the evaluation process is used to substantiate the removal of an FTO from the program.
- b. File Maintenance. The Area FTEP coordinator will oversee the maintenance, accuracy, and confidentiality of all program files.
- c. Performance Appraisal. The Area FTEP coordinator shall provide a detailed evaluation annually to each FTO on their performance as an FTO utilizing the CHP 118, Performance Appraisal – Officer. The Area FTEP coordinator should utilize the many opportunities that are available for appraising FTO performance. Some examples of areas on which an evaluation may be based are:
  - (1) Observations at briefings.
  - (2) Observations of field performance.
  - (3) Review of FTO-initiated reports and training documents.
  - (4) Discussions with trainees.

- (5) Review of completed CHP 115D, Field Training Officer Critique; and CHP 115F, Field Training and Evaluation Program Critique.
- (6) Discussions with other FTOs.
- (7) Discussions with Area supervisors and management.
- (8) Observations at End of Cycle meetings.
- (9) Monitoring assignment due dates.
- (10) Observations of teaching styles.
- (11) Discussions regarding program policies, procedures, and philosophies in both formal and informal settings.

8. TENURE.

a. General. Field Training Officers are to be assigned to the program on a permanent basis provided they remain current in the required POST certification. However, an FTO may choose at any time to resign from the program. Field Training Officers may also be removed from the assignment by the Area commander. Regardless of the reason, removal of FTOs shall be well-documented by the Area FTEP coordinator in a separation memorandum. This memorandum shall be retained in the FTO's field folder. Additionally, Area FTEP coordinators shall ensure they update active Area FTO rosters.

b. Resignation. Resignation is the usual avenue of departure from the FTEP. This option is strictly voluntary, and there is no expectation regarding the FTO's return to the program, although former FTOs may reapply.