



GACP
Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

Georgia P.O.S.T Basic Mandate Training: Review and Recommendations

Submitted by the Ad Hoc Basic Mandate Training Committee (2017)

Ad Hoc Basic Mandate Training Committee

Committee Chairperson

Chief Mark E. Kissel
Cherokee County School District Police Department

Committee Members

Chief Gene Wilson
Conyers Police Department

Chief Michael Register
Clayton County Police Department

Chief Connie Sampson
Georgia State University

Chief Elaine Snow – Retired
Rome Police Department

Chief Pat Labot
Atlanta Police Department

Director Jeff Miller – Certification & Training Division
Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council

Director Ray Saxon – Basic Training Division
Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Director J. Dale Mann – Retired
Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Purpose

In April 2016, Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) President Billy Grogan appointed the Ad Hoc Committee to review the Georgia P.O.S.T. Basic Mandate curriculum. The committee was composed of diverse representatives including municipal and county law enforcement agencies, Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council, and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center.

In conducting this review, the committee was charged with evaluating total training hours, identifying other state requirements and contemporary training needs.

This report is divided into three sections; the first section discusses the evolution of Basic Police (Mandate) Training and current trends in Georgia; the second section provides an analysis of the survey responses provided by chiefs, sheriffs and academy directors relative to Basic Police (Mandate) Training and the third section provides recommendations for consideration.

Evolution of Police Training and Current Trends

For almost a century, law enforcement has had a vision for a better educated and trained officer. While advancements have occurred since the 1960s the old issues of what we want officers to learn, how we want them to learn, understanding how the knowledge will be applied and identifying funding sources remain salient even as current events and rapidly evolving technology bring new challenges.

In the early-80s, Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council in cooperation with the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and the Georgia Sheriffs Association undertook a comprehensive job task analysis to assess the job duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills and abilities needed at the time to function as a peace officer in the state. As a result, the Basic Police Training Course curriculum and the supporting Peace Officer Reference Text (PORT) Manual were revised and for the first time, pre-service testing was incorporated to assess an applicant's aptitude in math and reading; these assessments were rated at an eighth grade level.

Across the United States, as we end the first decade of the 21st century, there are troubling signs of a “skills gap” in which many young adults lack the skills and work ethic needed for many of the jobs that pay a middle-class wage.¹

Some one million students drop-out of high school every year before earning a diploma. By large numbers, they say they dropped out because they felt classes were not interesting and were unrelentingly boring; in other words, school was not relevant or providing a pathway to their dreams.² Failure rates are more pronounced at the post-secondary level. The majority of four year colleges report that just 56 percent of students graduate within a 6 year period and at the community college level – the largest post-secondary system – fewer than 30 percent of students manage to earn an Associate’s degree within a 3 year period.³

While students drop out of high school and college for many reasons, some have indicated they could not see a clear, transparent connection between their program of study and tangible opportunities in the labor market. That said, the question is: how clear is the connection between the basic mandate curriculum offered at Georgia’s certified academies and technical college’s and its application in many of Georgia’s law enforcement agencies?

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, whose members include such companies as Microsoft, Apple, Cisco, and Pearson have been critical of outmoded approaches to education and are calling for more focus on “21st century skills” such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and communication.⁴ In these changing times, other critical areas including but not limited to, fundamentals of emergency/disaster management, terrorism and homeland security, computer and internet literacy, race/class/gender studies, community engagement and immigration may need to be considered as a necessary part of basic mandate training.

In the last 30 years, criminal justice programs (primarily at four year institutions) have included disciplines of sociology, psychology, urban planning, political science and public affairs all the while minimizing programs in computer science, accounting, statistics, ethnic studies, multi-

¹ Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2011

² Ibid

³ NCES/IPED Graduation Study and data from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

⁴ Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2011

culturalism, and cultural sensitivity. In the evolving high-tech, info-connected, culturally diverse, value driven and complex society, there is a need to ask if we are adequately preparing our officers to deliver the services required by the communities they serve.

Challenges facing law enforcement executives were identified by members of the International Association of Chiefs of Police during the Leadership in the 21st Century workshop held in 1999 and the National Institute of Justice's Planning for the Future workshop held in 2006; these include, but were not limited to managing a diverse work force, dwindling applicant pool, seeking more women and minorities, attracting a more techno-savvy applicant, and retaining and retraining the workforce; in the committee's opinion, these issues remain. It comes as no surprise that declining birth rates have resulted in a noticeable gender gap, a dwindling pool of young and an aging population. Women now account for 57 percent of all college students and 60 percent of the graduate students. More women than men are successfully completing degree programs.

The racial and ethnic demographics are also changing in the United States with upwards to 800,000 to 1 million foreign-born individuals immigrating each year. Between 2000 and 2014, the annual level of immigration increased 11.3 million people.⁵ In Georgia, the immigrant population totals 963,000 with the majority residing in the metro-Atlanta area.⁶

The Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University estimates that by 2018 some 14 million jobs will go to people with an associate's degree or occupational certificate; many in occupations such as electrician, construction manager, dental hygienist, paralegal and police officer. The research also indicates that 27 percent of people with post-secondary licenses or certificates – credentials short of an associate's degree – earn more than the average bachelor's degree recipient.

In 2011, Chief Stan York presented his 2011-2012 Goals of the Georgia Association Chiefs of Police; one of those was to develop a white paper addressing law enforcement training needs and the funding for those needs. As a result, in January 2012 the select committee issued the *Analysis of the*

⁵ *Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States*, April 2016. Migration Policy Institute

⁶ Migration Policy Institute tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's pooled 2010-2014 American Community Surveys.

Peace Officer and Prosecutor Training Fund. The document addressed the training challenges faced by law enforcement agencies and the respective academies in the delivery and funding for basic mandate, in-service, advanced and executive training. More pointedly, it noted the significant difference in the amount of training received and required for basic mandate as compared to other professions within the State of Georgia.

As a point of reference, a web-search of surrounding Southeastern states was conducted to identify the number of training hours delivered for certification of peace officers in those respective states. By comparison, the review found that of the seven states, Georgia ranked sixth in the number of hours. The average number of hours needed for peace officer certification is 547.

North Carolina	903 hours
Florida	620 hours
Alabama	520 hours
Tennessee	501 hours
South Carolina	480 hours
Georgia	408 hours
Mississippi	400 hours

In 2016, the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics released the *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013* report ([Appendix A](#)). The report uses data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) 2013 Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies (CLETA) to describe basic training programs for new recruits based on their content, instructors, and teaching methods. It also describes the recruits' demographics, completion rates, and reasons for failure. The data describing recruits cover those entering basic training programs from 2011 to 2013. The data describing academies are based on 2013, the latest year referenced in the survey.

A total of 664 academies nationwide provided basic law enforcement training and were eligible to be included in the survey. A total of 591, or 89%, of all eligible academies responded to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) 2013 Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies (CLETA).

Excluding field training, the average length of a basic law enforcement training program in a training academy was about 840 hours, or 21 weeks.

Academies operated by state POST agencies (650 hours), technical schools (703 hours), and sheriffs' offices (706 hours) had the shortest training programs on average. Across all types of academies, each recruit spent an average of 806 hours each completing basic training.⁷

Among the major topical training areas in the CLETA survey instrument, the most required training hours were in the area of operations (more than 200 hours per recruit). Major topics covered in operations training included patrol procedures (52 hours), investigations (42 hours), emergency vehicle operations (38 hours), and report writing (25 hours).⁸ **See Table 6**

An average of 168 hours per recruit were required for training on weapons, defensive tactics, and the use of force. Recruits spent most of this time on firearms (71 hours) and self-defense (60 hours) training. Recruits also spent an average of 21 hours on the use of force, which may have included training on agency policies, de-escalation tactics, and crisis intervention strategies.⁹

Recruits were typically also required to take training classes in self-improvement (89 hours per recruit) and legal education (86 hours). On average, more than half of self-improvement training hours were related to health and fitness (49 hours). A majority of the legal training focused on criminal and constitutional law (53 hours) and traffic law (23 hours). Nearly a third (29%) of academies required basic foreign language training with an average of 9 hours per recruit (not shown in table).¹⁰

****Continue to Next Page****

⁷ Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013.

⁸ Ibid, pg. 5

⁹ Ibid, pg. 5

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 5

Table 6
Major subject areas included in basic training programs in state and local law enforcement training academies, 2013

Training area	Percent of academies With training	Average number of hours of instruction required per recruit
Operations		
Report writing	99%	25
Patrol procedures	98	52
Investigations	98	42
Traffic accident investigations	98	23
Emergency vehicle operations	97	38
Basic first aid/CPR	97	24
Computers/information systems	61	9
Weapons/defensive tactics/use of force		
Defensive tactics	99%	60
Firearms skills	98	71
Use of force	98	21
Nonlethal weapons	88	16
Self-improvement		
Ethics and integrity	98%	8
Health and fitness	96	49
Communications	91	15
Professionalism	85	11
Stress prevention/management	81	6
Legal education		
Criminal/constitutional law	98%	53
Traffic law	97	23
Juvenile justice law/procedures	97	10

*Excludes academies that did not provide this type of instruction.

In 1970, the Georgia legislature enacted the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Act, herein referred to as the “P.O.S.T. Act.”¹¹ As a result, the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (GAPOSTC) was established and vested with the authority to “establish and modify the curriculum, including methods of instruction, composing the basic training courses and to set the minimum number of hours therefor.”¹²

Pursuant to law, the *Rules of Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council*, Chapter 464-3 were established by the Council and the first standardized Basic Police Training Course was developed consisting of a minimum of 114 hours of instruction (**Appendix B**). The approved course consisted of seven instructional blocks; Administration (4 hours), Community Relations (11 hours), Criminal Law (20 hours), Traffic and Accident

¹¹ Official Code of Georgia, Title 35, Chapter 8

¹² O.C.G.A. 35-8-7

Investigations (16 hours), Criminal Investigation (21 hours), Skills (33 hours), and Police Patrol (9 hours). An additional seventeen (17) hours were approved as alternate subjects that may be substituted in lieu of other subjects in their related area.

At that time, pursuant to Chapter 464-3-.02 Council was authorized to consider other training as being equivalent to the established Basic Police Mandate Course; these included:

- A combination of courses of three months of duration or longer held at and sponsored by the Northwestern University Traffic Institute; or a regular course of instruction in Police Administration at the Southern Police Institute; or a regular course of instruction for police officers held at the F.B.I. National Academy.
- An Associates or higher degree in either Arts or Sciences received at an accredited institution or higher learning, which degree was received in Police Administration, Police Sciences or Criminology.
- Successful completion of a basic police training course of instruction of at least 114 hours duration at a Police Training facility.
- Any combination of courses sponsored by the F.B.I., the Georgia Police Academy, Metropol, or any law enforcement training division of an accredited university or college, the sum total of which would be equivalent to the adopted Basic Mandate Training Course.

Although GAPOSTC had created and approved the Basic Police Training Course, it should be noted that each law enforcement agency was encouraged to prescribe additional training requirements as it deemed necessary and appropriate.¹³

The P.O.S.T. Act has been modified several times since 1970 and so too has the content and requisite hours of the Basic Police (Mandate) Training Course. Based on information obtained from GAPOSTC, there have been nine revisions to the course as noted on the following page ([Appendix C; Items 1 – 10](#)):

¹³ O.C.G.A. 35-8-16

- 1982 - Six functional areas 240 hours Eff. date Unknown
- 1992 – Seven functional areas 280 hours Eff. July 1, 1992
- 1994 – Seven functional areas 320 hours Eff. July 1, 1994
- 1995 – Seven functional areas 360 hours Eff. July 1, 1995
- 1997 – Seven functional areas 384 hours Eff. July 1, 1997
- 1999 – Seven functional areas 400 hours Eff. January 1, 1999
- 2001 – Seven functional areas 400 hours Eff. January 1, 2001
- 2003 – Seven functional areas 404 hours Eff. July 1, 2003
- 2006 – Seven functional areas 408 hours Eff. January 1, 2006
- 2016 - Seven functional areas 408 hours Eff. March 7, 2016

The significant increase of 126 hours in 1982 was likely the result of the job task analysis conducted in the early-80's. Since that time, modest changes have been made to the curriculum as the result of increase/decrease of training hours by topic (e.g. interpersonal communication), additional training topics (e.g. judgmental shooting, hazardous materials), conversion of some topics to independent study and realignment of training objectives.

In March 2005, a select committee was established by order of Bill Hutson, Executive Director, GAPOST to review and recommend (as may be necessary) changes to the Basic Police Training Course; the committee was chaired by Ryan Powell, Director – Operations Division, GAPOST. The remaining fourteen members represented the Georgia Association Chiefs of Police, Georgia Sheriffs' Association, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, Regional Law Enforcement Academies, municipal and county police agencies, and sheriffs' offices.

A report entitled *Basic Law Enforcement Training Course Revision Committee, Final Sequenced List from January 23, 2006 Meeting* was prepared and included 40 areas of instruction, 33 sub-categories and totaled 659 training hours ([Appendix D](#)). A cursory review shows modest changes were made to existing areas of instruction and new topics were added (e.g. bias-based profiling, standardized field sobriety testing). The most significant increase in hours resulted from two new topics; Spanish (40 hours) and Physical Fitness (60 hours).

The report was never submitted to GAPOST Council for consideration due to logistical and budgetary concerns.

In September 2012, GPSTC's Basic Training Division staff finalized revisions to the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course – Program of Instruction and the Training Objectives Reference Matrix (**Appendix E**). These revisions were an update to the curriculum as it existed at the time. The intent was to update/consolidate/omit some training objectives in an attempt to make better use of the time allocated to basic training. The revisions did not change the total number of training hours. The revisions were approved by GAPOSTC on September 12, 2012 at a regularly scheduled meeting and were implemented on January 1, 2013.

To ensure consistency in operations among the GPSTC Regional Police Academies, the College/University Academies, and other state and departmental academies authorized and certified by GAPOSTC to deliver training, the *Uniform Academy Regulations* (**Appendix F**) were updated and approved by GAPOST Council on December 9, 2015 at a regularly scheduled meeting and were implemented on January 1, 2016.

In May 2015, the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* was released pro-offering recommendations on policing practices to promote effective crime reduction and build public trust. The main topic areas, referred to as "pillars" were enumerated; Pillar 5 addressed Training and Education. A total of twelve recommendations were made with five of those specifically addressing actions to be undertaken by Peace Officer Standards and Training (POSTs) nationwide. They are:

- 5.6 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should make Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) a part of both basic recruit and in-service officer training;
- 5.7 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should ensure that basic officer training includes lessons to include social interaction as well as tactical skills;
- 5.8 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should ensure that basic recruit and in-service officer training include curriculum on the disease of addiction;

- 5.9 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should ensure both basic recruit and in-service training incorporate content around recognizing and confronting implicit bias and cultural responsiveness; and
- 5.10 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should require both basic recruit and in-service training on policing in a democratic society.¹⁴

In an attempt to measure the current state of policies and training, PowerDMS, in collaboration with the Police Foundation developed a small survey instrument for the purpose of identifying how agencies update their policies, how they ensure officers see those policies, and how they conduct training to enhance performance, outcomes, accountability and legitimacy. The results of the survey were documented in a brief report entitled, *State of Policy in Law Enforcement 2016*.

Using a convenience sample, 107 agencies responded to the survey representing 20 states with the majority of respondents having more than 100 and less than 300 sworn officers. Fifty-three percent indicated they were accredited by CALEA or a state association.

In reviewing the report it was interesting to note the following relative to training:

- 91 percent indicated an increased need for more training.
- 43 percent indicated the focus of training has changed. Specifically, the respondents indicated the “new” focus areas included (in rank order):
 1. Active shooter, ambushes, terrorism
 2. Implicit bias, cultural diversity/sensitivity
 3. De-escalation
 4. Scenario-based training
 5. Community interaction/issues
 6. Legitimacy/procedural justice
 7. Situational awareness/defensive tactics
 8. Use of force/less than lethal force
 9. Basic/essential training for new recruits

¹⁴ President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. 2015. *Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing*. Washington DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

10. Officer Safety

- Many of the agencies were moving away from traditional lecture formats to more cost effective, readily available formats. Seventy-four percent used on-line passive (lecture/presentation), sixty-five percent used on-line interactive (tests/scenarios) and forty-nine percent were using virtual reality training.¹⁵

The survey focused on policy training through in-service, however it is important to recognize that no matter what type of training (basic vs. in-service) the needs are similar to, or consistent with the responses obtained from the survey administered by this committee during the period of October 31, 2016 through December 7, 2016; the results of which will be discussed next.

Methodology and Analysis of Mandate Training Survey

The Ad Hoc Basic Training Committee in cooperation with Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training developed a 17-question survey that was sent state-wide to all chiefs of police, sheriffs and academy directors. The survey was conducted confidentially and all but three questions were close-ended with pre-generated options. The remaining questions were open-ended and allowed for the respondent to provide contextual information.

A total of 328 responses were received with the majority of responses being obtained early in the administration. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents (221 people) responded to Question 9 - What courses within Basic Mandate would you like to see expanded, reduced or deleted?

Of the 221 respondents, the average time taken to complete the survey was 28 minutes. This is deemed important as showing the respondents were thoughtful in providing the responses to both the closed and open-ended questions. The highest recorded time was 83 minutes and it was the opinion of the committee the respondent became distracted by other duties or occurrences. The lowest time was 1.5 minutes.

¹⁵ State of Policy in Law Enforcement 2016; pg. 11

Analysis of the Data

Question #1

Should Basic Mandate training hours be increased?

Answered: 326

Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	85.58% 279
No	14.42% 47
Total	326

Question #2

Should the delivery of Basic Mandate be modified to allow instructors to train to the 'standard' (proficiency) rather than "seat time (hours)?"

Answered: 322

Skipped: 6

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	74.22% 239
No	5.59% 18
Maybe	20.19% 65
Total	322

Question #3

If Mandate Training hours were increased, would you support the use of on-line curriculum to complete some portions of classroom instruction?

Answered: 324

Skipped: 4

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	53.09% 172
No	28.70% 93
Maybe	18.21% 59
Total	324

Question #4

If Mandate Training hours were increased, would you support the use of independent study in lieu of classroom instruction?

Answered: 326

Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	29.14% 95
No	44.79% 146
Maybe	26.07% 85
Total	326

Question #5

Would you support “firearms familiarization training” as a prerequisite to determine if an applicant has the ability to manipulate a weapon prior to attending an academy?

Answered: 325

Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	82.15% 267
No	9.54% 31
Maybe	8.31% 27
Total	325

Question #6

Would you support some “mandated” training hours (e.g. practicums) to be delivered by the hiring agency after completing the academic portion of instruction?

Answered: 327

Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	48.93% 160
No	25.99% 85
Maybe	25.08% 82
Total	327

Question #7

Would you support the retention of students who failed firearms qualification within the academy with the understanding they must “qualify” prior to graduation?

Answered: 325

Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	64.31% 209
No	18.15% 59
Maybe	17.54% 57
Total	325

Question #8

Would you support the retention of students who failed EVOC/Driver Training within the academy with the understanding they must “qualify” prior to graduation?

Answered: 327

Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	68.20% 223
No	15.60% 51
Maybe	16.21% 53
Total	327

Question #9

What courses within Basic Mandate would you like to see expanded, reduced or deleted?

Answered: 222

Skipped: 106

To review individual responses proceed to [Appendix G](#)

The top five responses relative to **expanding** course topics were:

1. CIT/De-escalation/Handling of Mentally Ill
2. Judgmental Use of Force
3. Intermediate/Tactical Firearm Skills
4. Interpersonal Communication (scenario-based)
5. Ethics/Professional Liability

The following course topics were mentioned relative to **reducing** time needed on some course topics (in no specific order): Courtroom demeanor, EVOC, Crime Victim Compensation, Arrest/Booking, Bombs/Explosives, Arson Investigation, Motor Vehicle Theft Investigation, First Responder, Universal Precautions, Crime Scene, and Investigative areas.

The following course topics were mentioned relative to **deletion** (in no specific order): Arson Investigation, Fingerprinting, Child Seat Restraint, Traffic Control, POST Act, Arrest/Booking, Stress, Patrol/Observation, and Shotgun.

Question #10

What courses would you like to see added as a new topic? How many hours?

Answered: 211 Skipped: 117

To review individual responses proceed to [Appendix H](#)

The top five responses relative to **new** course topics were:

1. CIT/Interpersonal Communication @ 8 - 40 hours
2. Lidar/Radar @ standard hours
3. Standardized Field Sobriety Testing @ standard hours
4. Verbal Judo @ hours not specified
5. Intox 9000 @ standard hours

Question #11

Should use of force training include more scenario-based training?

Answered: 327 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	95.11% 311
No	0.92% 3
Maybe	3.98% 13
Total	327

****Continue to Next Page****

Question #12

Would you support the inclusion of Advanced Firearms or similar training as a way to enhance officer awareness of various weapon nomenclature and tactics within the current 40-hour block of Firearms instruction?

Answered: 326 Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	66.87% 218
No	14.11% 46
Maybe	19.02% 62
Total	326

Question #13

Should the 4-hour block on Interpersonal Communication be expanded to include Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and de-escalation techniques?

Answered: 328 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	91.16% 299
No	3.35% 11
Maybe	5.49% 18
Total	328

Question #14

Would you support the inclusion of First Responder training as a way to enhance the current 8-hour block of First Aid/CPR instruction?

Answered: 327 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	78.90% 258
No	12.54% 41
Maybe	8.56% 28
Total	327

Question #15

If Basic Mandate training hours were extended, are you willing to provide additional adjunct instructors for your area academy?

Answered: 321 Skipped: 7

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	89.10% 286
No	10.90% 35
Total	321

Question #16

To encourage officer wellness and safety, should physical fitness be an integral part of the daily academy regimen?

Answered: 328 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	77.74% 255
No	6.71% 22
Maybe	15.55% 51
Total	328

Question #17

Are there any other comments you would like to make in reference to Basic Mandate Training?

Answered: 144 Skipped: 184

To review individual responses proceed to [Appendix I](#)

Responses to this question were diverse and wide-ranging. The reader is encouraged to take the time to read the individual statements found in the appendix.

The respondents supported an increase of training hours and there is a willingness to provide additional personnel to the academies.

It came as no surprise that CIT/De-escalation/Handling the Mentally Ill was at the top of the list for expanding current course topics, or adding new topics.

In 2014, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police Executive Board adopted the recommendations pro-offered by the Ad Hoc Committee on Mental Health Issues in Law Enforcement in their report, *Mental Health Issues in Law Enforcement: Concept and Issues White Paper Review and Recommendations*. It was recommended that agencies should develop a strategic goal of requiring that all officers attend crisis intervention training after they have two years' experience with the understanding that each officer needs to have an understanding of how to interact with individuals in crisis.¹⁶ More importantly, the agency should provide specific operational guidelines for officers responding to persons with mental illness with emphasis on de-escalation techniques.¹⁷

As one of the major recommendations of the 21st Century Policing Report, the State of Georgia has taken steps to provide this training to more officers. Currently, the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course, 2016 Edition allots 4-hours on Mental Health, Intellectual Disability Disorder & Substance Abuse and 8-hours on Interpersonal Communication. Ninety-one percent favored the expansion/inclusion of Interpersonal Communication for Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)/de-escalation training.

There was modest support for the use of On-line curriculum (53 percent) to complete some portions of the classroom instruction. The committee asked this question recognizing the need for officers to be prepared and possess the requisite "basic" skills necessary to perform in today's workplace. Being mindful of the "skills gap" among young adults and the current trend for agencies to use computers to prepare incident reports and issue traffic citations and conduct other administrative duties.

Currently, GPSTC offers a number of on-line courses for completion of in-service training hours and other similar courses (e.g. GCIC's Security & Integrity, NIMS training) can be completed with the use of a computer. It stands to reason that computers could be used for the delivery and testing of some portions of the basic curriculum.

At the same time, forty-five percent of the respondents did not favor the use of independent study segments. Currently, five segments of the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course, 2016 Edition are listed at independent study

¹⁶ *Mental Health Issues in Law Enforcement: Concept and Issues White Paper Review and Recommendations*; pg. 38

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pg. 38

(IS); these include: crime victim compensation, arrest booking procedures, terrorism, NIMS: Intro. to the Incident command system (ICS100) and universal precautions.

There was strong support (95 percent) for more scenario-based training as it relates to use of force. This type of training is without question some of the most effective training that any officer can receive so long as it is conducted in a way that enhances the officer's critical thinking, problem solving, communication and tactical skills. The challenge is to rate officer performance consistently (especially when more than one evaluator is used) across both lethal and non-lethal scenarios. While the question was directed to use of force, scenario-based training can (and should be) used in multiple training areas. Currently, 20 hours is allocated to the use of force and judgmental simulation in the use of deadly force.

Three questions were directed towards firearms training:

- Should firearms familiarization training be a prerequisite prior to attending an academy.

The committee recognized that law enforcement agencies are faced with an applicant pool that has never served in the military, personally owned, or handled a weapon of any kind. To minimize the potential failure rate during firearms training, agencies should consider some form of familiarization training as a prerequisite; eighty-two percent of the respondents supported this question.

- Should a student be retained in the academy if they failed firearms qualification with the understanding they must qualify prior to graduation;

The committee heard from agency heads that failure rates during firearms qualification were high resulting in the recruits being dismissed from the academy. Currently, the *Uniform Academy Regulations* (as adopted January 1, 2016) requires the recruit to achieve two qualifying scores of 80% or greater on the courses of fire adopted by POST. If the recruit fails to achieve the two qualifying scores, the student may, at the discretion of the academy director, be authorized an additional number of rounds of ammunition, not to exceed 400, for remediation, practice and qualification. A recruit who is

unable to successfully achieve two qualifying scores of 80% or greater shall be notified in writing and dismissed from the academy.¹⁸

Sixty-four percent of the respondents favored the retention of the officer within the academy program. The committee is aware that approximately 6.5% of the officers attending the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course administered by the GPSTC Regional Academies fail firearms training. The failure level may improve with prerequisite weapons familiarization at the agency level.

- Should Advanced Firearms or similar training be included within the current block of instruction to enhance an officer's awareness of various weapons, nomenclature and tactics.

The committee recognized that many law enforcement officers (recruit and active) have little, if any familiarization with semi-automatic/automatic weapons. Given the increase in the number of incidents where these types of weapons were used, officers should have (at a minimum) requisite knowledge on how to render the weapon safe. At the same time, officers should be capable of using such weapons and current programs of instruction (e.g. patrol rifle and advanced firearms) while offered by GPSTC fill-up quickly and are difficult to come-by. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents supported inclusion of awareness, nomenclature and tactics.

Finally, seventy-eight percent of the respondents favored physical fitness being an integral part of the daily academy regimen to support officer wellness and safety. The decline of health and fitness among those in the law enforcement community is an indisputable fact. The consequences of this phenomenon are also well known; greater vulnerability to on-duty injury and illness, increased exposure to liability and loss of respect by the public at large, among others.

The committee acknowledges the findings of a CALEA Update which stated, "As an occupational group, LEOs have greater morbidity and mortality rates than the general public, principally due to cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, and suicide. Various law enforcement agencies have calculated the cost of an in-service heart attack to be between \$400,000 and \$750,000. Surveys suggest heart disease accounts for 20 – 50% of early

¹⁸ Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, *Uniform Academy Regulations*. 2016; pg. 22

retirements and back problems for 15 – 35%. In fact, younger officers, under the age of 35, have a lower risk of medical problems than the average American, but those 35 and over have a higher risk. One study of a major metropolitan police agency indicated that almost 50% of its officers had at least three of the five major risk factors for coronary heart disease – high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, inactivity, poor cardiovascular fitness, or high blood pressure.”¹⁹

Recommendations

It is noted that modest changes as approved by GAPOSTC have been made over the years and on at least one occasion, a program of instruction totaling 659 hours was developed but never presented to GAPOSTC due to logistical and budgetary concerns. The committee acknowledges that it is difficult to address curriculum content without also addressing the programmatic, fiscal and operational impact on the delivery system. As such, the following recommendations are presented to those in higher authority for further consideration:

- The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police should continue to partner with Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training, the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, the Georgia Sheriffs’ Association, and representatives of the Technical College System of Georgia to identify (1) next steps in the potential revision/modification of the Georgia Basic Law Enforcement Officer Training Course (2) the impact on current academy delivery system relative to those changes.
- The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police should work closely with the Governor’s Law Enforcement Task Force as they examine the Basic Law Enforcement Officer Training Course to establish competency-based standards that are designed to equip officers with critical thinking and tactical skills needed to face the challenges of policing in a modern society.

¹⁹ *Health and Fitness in Law Enforcement: A Voluntary Model Program Response to a Critical Issue. CALEA Update Magazine; Issue 87. 2010*

- The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police should work with other state and local entities to identify funding sources necessary to support the delivery of any revisions/modifications to the Basic Law Enforcement Officer Training Course. The funding sources must be able to support the personnel, equipment, modification to facilities and other logistical needs of any academy approved by GAPOSTC for delivery of the Basic Law Enforcement Officer Training Course.

*****End of Report*****

Appendices

- Appendix A U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics
Bulletin, July 2016
- Appendix B Basic Police Training Course Curriculum – 1970
- Appendix C Basic Police (Mandate) Training Courses
- | | |
|------|------|
| C-1 | 1982 |
| C-2 | 1992 |
| C-3 | 1994 |
| C-4 | 1995 |
| C-5 | 1997 |
| C-6 | 1999 |
| C-7 | 2001 |
| C-8 | 2003 |
| C-9 | 2006 |
| C-10 | 2016 |
- Appendix D Basic Law Enforcement Training Course Revision
Committee, Final Sequenced List from January 23, 2006
Meeting
- Appendix E Basic Law Enforcement Training Course, Program of
Instruction – Revised September 2012
- Training Objectives Reference Matrix – Revised
September 2012
- Appendix F Uniform Academy Regulations – Revised January 1, 2016
- Appendix G Survey Responses – Question #9
- Appendix H Survey Responses – Question #10
- Appendix I Survey Responses – Question #17