

WSCJTC 24 Hour In-Service Training Requirement

Background: *RCW 43-101-095, WAC 139-05-300*

During the four commission meetings held in March, June, September and December of 2004 the commission recognized that continuing education and training is the cornerstone for a successful career as a peace officer, and in turn to providing competent public safety services to the communities of Washington State. Therefore in 2005 the Criminal Justice Training Commission filed WAC rule 139-05-300 ensuring that Washington State law enforcement professionals maintained a standard consistent with other professions by requiring, recognizing and tracking ongoing credible and transferrable education and training.

Per [WAC 139-05-300](#), effective January 1, 2006, every peace officer certified under RCW 43.101.095 must complete a minimum of twenty-four hours of in-service training annually, beginning the year after certification. The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission is responsible for determining what constitutes in-service training and for auditing agency compliance with this rule. The training does not have to be provided by WSCJTC; training can be developed and provided by the employer or using other resources.

Status:

While not every officer or agency has fully met the standard, the tables below document the progress toward full compliance. Approximately 85% of Washington State agencies and 95% of officers qualify under this WAC.

Agencies

Audit Year	Total Agencies Reviewed	In Compliance	Not in Compliance	% of Compliant Agencies
2006	222	153	69	69%
2007	225	196	29	87%
2008	229	193	36	84%
2009	226	195	31	86%
2010	225 + 1 Tribal	189 + 1 Tribal	36	84%

Personnel

Audit Year	Total Personnel Files Viewed	In Compliance	Not in Compliance	% of Compliant Personnel
2006	10,147	9,486	661	93%
2007	10,397	10,131	266	97%
2008	9,440	9,168	272	97%
2009	10,385	10,075	310	97%
2010	10,442 + 14 Tribal	9,832 + 14 Tribal	610	95%

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Exemptions and Extensions: *A sheriff or chief may request a three-month personal extension of the requirement by doing so in writing to the commission.*

Supporting the successful nature of this process and program, very few (<1%) agencies ask for an extension (see WAC), further indicating that the 24 hr. requirement is widely attainable. In fact the initial development and delivery of on-line training by the Criminal Justice Training Commission staff has not been a significant contributor to the attainment of these training hours in recent years.

Recording of Training Hours:

Training must be recorded by the employing agency in a format WSCJTC can review. Although WSCJTC maintains some records of the WSCJTC sponsored and hosted training officers attend, agencies should not rely on those records. Consequently agencies must maintain records for all of their officers. To assist the WSCJTC has a records template available upon request.

Approval of Training Hours: *The commission will publish guidelines for approved in-service training. For more guidance regarding in-service training, examples will be posted on the WSCJTC website.*

The following is to clarify how credit is conferred and the determining factors for acceptance and applicability to the achievement of the 24-hour requirement. As noted in commission meeting minutes (Sept 2004):

In-service training currently provided at the agency level, such as firearms, first aid, blood-borne pathogens, defensive tactics, and EVOC would all be acceptable in meeting this requirement. In addition, any properly documented conference training would be allowed; where formal training is provided.the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). [Are providers of accepted training.]

To reiterate, the intent of the 24-hour mandate is to ensure that Washington State law enforcement professionals maintain a standard training consistent with other professions. The standard is statewide and applied to all law enforcement officers.

As a statewide standard, it is apparent that the 24-hours of training must also be applicable across departments; that the skills, knowledge and abilities be transferable and transportable and does not apply to a specific agency's equipment, operations or procedures. Therefore the primary consideration by the Criminal Justice Training Commission auditors is whether or not the training in question is widely or wholly applicable to all LEO's in Washington State. The second is if the training is indeed aimed at enhancing the job functions of a LEO including training related to generally acceptable special assignments, such as investigations, community relations, school-safety, child interviewing, traffic enforcement, marine patrol and K-9.

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As a result training on agency-specific policy, procedures, and equipment would not be eligible for in-service credits.

All WSCJTC sponsored and hosted training can be used toward the mandate. Additionally, relevant vendor provided training, within the framework stated, is also creditable (i.e. Reid I&I, Caliber Press, Results Group and many, many others) as well as regionally developed training (Yakima PD and Snohomish counties, for example, present a training agenda multiple times to multiple agencies within their counties) is accepted.

There is no stipulation that training must be obtained in a traditional classroom setting. To assist agencies in obtaining relevant training, the WSCJTC has developed on-line eLearning sessions and made CD's available to agencies to augment or provide a limited number of the in-service hours. Other entities have also produced online or disk training that is used (FLETC, FEMA, etc.) that meet the standard.

This is consistent with other high-risk service-professions that require continuing education/in-service training. Most programs are very specific to the requirements of the job tasks i.e. Attorneys, Dentists, Judges, Teaching, EMT/Paramedics.

The Commission recognizes that our stakeholders are diverse; Washington State agencies vary from the very small to the very large; include municipal, county, and state jurisdictions; encompass urban, suburban and rural area. To accommodate this variation, and as long as the training is within the minimal framework stated, training content is dictated more by the individual and agency needs than by the commission.

Defining In-Service Training

As part of the Criminal Justice Training Commission staff's decision making processes we considered various sources including similar agencies with regulatory authority and private business practices. Below are a few of the typical working definitions or "terms-of-art" utilized.

- In-service training is education for employees to help them develop their skills in a specific discipline or occupation. In-service training takes place *after* an individual begins work responsibilities. Most typically, in-service training is conducted during a break in the individual's work schedule.
[Lingual Links Dictionary](#)
- In-Service education is defined as a program of planned activities designed to increase the competencies needed by all licensed personnel in the performance of their professional responsibilities. In this context, "competencies" are defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which enable personnel to carry out their tasks with maximum effectiveness.
[Tennessee Department of Education](#)

To clarify what is meant by in-service training, Ohio utilized the definition from the National Policy Guidelines for Staff Development, with some modification:

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- Education received in a structured setting that enables one to become more competent professionally, i.e., to further develop technical subject-matter competencies to keep abreast of and, if possible, ahead of change; to explore educational and technological content and processes in varying depths and to extend personal competencies.
[Journal of Extension - Periodical](#)

Generally accepted as NOT in-service training

As noted above training on policies and procedures is not acceptable for credit; the intent of the WAC was to require on-going in-service training, not the training of business practice or business standard. Field training to prepare an officer to work in a specific jurisdiction would also be a business practice –alternately it could be considered a continuation of basic training. In either case, field training would not be considered ‘in-service’. Business-practice/rule is generally defined as:

- A method, procedure, process, or rule employed or followed by a company in the pursuit of its objectives (from: [businessdictionary.com](#))
- Essential features of processes needed to effect standard operating procedures in a consistent manner (from: [finance-dictionary.com](#))
- A statement that defines or constrains some aspect of the business and always resolves to be either true or false. Business rules are intended to assert business structure or to control or influence the behavior of the business. Business rules describe the operations, definitions and constraints that apply to an organization. Business rules can apply to people, processes, corporate behavior and computing systems in an organization, and are put in place to help the organization achieve its goals (from: [Wikipedia](#))

‘National’ Standard:

While there is no federal mandate for in-service training, The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals published its recommendations for improvements in 1973. Specific recommendations for upgrading the quality of police personnel ranged from proposals for improving recruitment and selection to encouraging the imposition of extensive recruit basic and in-service training requirements that would be made mandatory for all police personnel. ([IADLEST](#))

IADLEST Mission

To research, develop, and share information, ideas and innovations which assist states in establishing effective and defensible standards for employment and training of law enforcement officers, and, in those states where dual responsibility exists, correctional personnel.

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In response, The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), generally considered a primary resource for academies and POSTs nationwide, created a model minimum state standard for in-service training.

Model Minimum State Standards In-Service Training

4.0 In-Service Training

IADLEST endorses the concept of additional, commission mandated annual in-service law enforcement training for sworn or commissioned law enforcement officers following basic certification or licensure. We would recommend leaving the number of training hours and the selection and/or approval of subjects to the discretion of local law enforcement administrators, **subject to the guidance and minimums set by the commission.** *(Emphasis added)*

Commentary

As with many professions, and more so than most, law enforcement is an ever-changing occupation; laws, court decisions, techniques, technology, and indeed the society that we regulate and serve, is in a constant state of flux. For this reason, it is necessary that police and corrections officers keep abreast of their field, so that they can more effectively serve the citizens, help the agencies that employ them avoid civil liability, and develop necessary supervisory and management skills. Unfortunately, in some jurisdictions the continuing education requirement for law enforcement is either non-existent or less than that of some less complex occupations such as barbers or real estate salespersons. This situation must be rectified in order for the criminal justice system to achieve optimal quality and excellence in service.

4.1.1 Statutory Authority; Purpose

Each state legislature should provide its commission with the statutory authority to mandate continuing education requirements for police and corrections officers as a condition of certification or licensure. **The purpose of such training should be to ensure continued proficiency in necessary skills, become familiar with new developments and techniques, and achieve a revitalized sense of compassion, professionalism and career interest.** *(Emphasis added)*

4.1.2 Resources

Each state legislature should provide adequate funding to its commission to assist in the development, presentation and monitoring of in-service training requirements.

4.1.3 Criteria

The criteria for needs assessment, curriculum development, instructor qualifications, research, testing, and student safety should be no less stringent than that which is prescribed for recruit training programs. <https://www.iadlest.org/Projects/ModelStandards.aspx>

Other State Standards:

Staff randomly researched requirements for in-service training from other academies and POSTs. Almost all agencies have some sort of identifiable in-service training requirement. The required number of hours differs greatly. In most cases, training topics are specified and consists of classroom training either held by or approved by the POST. Many states set the training agenda (to include number of hours and material topic) per year; outside training is not applicable.

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State	Hours	Notes:
Indiana	24/year	Topic areas specified, required minimums in skill-based training (firearms, DT, EVOC) http://www.in.gov/ilea/2330.htm#What is the current mandated in servi ce training for police officers
Maryland	18/year	Recertify every three years; approved training only; some required topics; add'l qualifications with firearms http://mdle.net/regs/ptcgenregs.pdf ; see 12.04.01.12
Virginia	48 per two year period	Forty hours of approved training plus 8 hours of legal instructor; recertify every two years http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/standardstraining/CJTrainingReferenceManual.cfm
California	36/year	Varies with position; required minimums in skill-based training http://www.post.ca.gov/refresher-training.aspx
New Mexico	40 per 2 yr period	Includes specific hours in specific subjects (i.e. four hours pursuit training) http://nmlea.dps.state.nm.us/index.php/accredited-curriculum/
Arizona	8/year	Only approved training – must present materials to post and must be on allowable topics http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/title_13/13-04.htm
Oregon	84 per 3 year period	Includes specific hours in specific subjects (i.e. 24 hours Firearms/Use of Force training; add'l 24 hours leadership related for persons holding leadership certifications) http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_200/oar_259/259_008.html .
Idaho	40 per two year period	Must be 'law enforcement related', non-compliance can result in suspensions of an officer's certification; law enforcement related defined similarly to WA State (e-mail, John Parmann, Feb 13) http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/11/1101.pdf (see Section 360, Page 63)
Pennsylvania	*12/year	* <i>And</i> , first aid/CPR, qualify for each weapon utilized; actual yearly training is set in curriculum by POST. http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/document/1223000/2012_course_descriptions_pdf

Conclusion

In the final analysis when considering both the small number of hours required and the wide scope of acceptable subject matter allowed, Washington's acceptable training framework is very flexible. Our legislated requirements are not as demanding as that of most states.

In fact given the nature of most law suits, there may be merit in strengthening the requirements to include specific skill training in high liability areas for all officers. There is no apparent merit in removing any of the parameters now set.

There are many resources that can be used to meet the requirement; the data supports that most agencies meet or exceed the training requirement.

Other law enforcement related organizations may have other requirements to meet their specific goals (CALEA, WASPC, insuring agencies). The Criminal Justice Training Commission recognizes that such organizations often award credit for training outside the scope of the WAC requirements. WSCJTC does not regulate or evaluate the value of those requirements as those comparisons are not relevant to our mission.