

Field Training Program - Deputies

417.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for field training that ensure standardized training and evaluation; facilitate the transition from the academic setting to the actual performance of general law enforcement duties; and introduce the policies, procedures and operations of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. The policy addresses the administration of field training and the selection, supervision, training and responsibilities of the Field Training Officer (FTO) (COMAR 12.04.01.17(F)).

417.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Probationary Deputy Sheriff - A newly hired deputy sheriff that has completed a Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) approved police academy and is on entrance level probation. The deputy sheriff will be assigned to the Patrol Division and will complete a four phase Field Training Program.

Contractual Deputy Sheriff - An MPTSC-approved officer that is hired by the Sheriff's Office as a deputy sheriff on a contractual basis. The deputy sheriff will be hired for a specific job assignment as outlined within their contract. The deputy sheriff will complete a Field Training Program that is at least 80 hours long and is specific to their assignment.

Courthouse Deputy Sheriff - An MPTSC-approved officer that is hired by the Sheriff's Office as a deputy sheriff to be assigned to provide security at the Circuit Courthouse. The deputy sheriff will complete at least an 80-hour Field Training Program that is specific to courthouse security and other assigned duties.

417.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office that all newly hired or appointed deputy trainees will participate in field training that is staffed and supervised by trained and qualified Field Training Officers (FTOs).

417.3 FIELD TRAINING

The Office shall establish minimum standards for field training, which should be of sufficient duration to prepare deputy trainees for law enforcement duties and be in compliance with state mandates related to field training (COMAR 12.04.01.17). The field training is designed to prepare trainees for a patrol assignment and ensure they acquire the skills needed to operate in a safe, productive and professional manner, in accordance with the general law enforcement duties of this office. Field training for specialty positions (e.g. contractual, courthouse, etc.) may be modified to fit the needs of the specific position.

Field training (COMAR 12.04.01.17):

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- (a) Shall include activities designed to familiarize the individual with the duties of the deputy position, as defined and administered by this office.
- (b) May be conducted in conjunction with an entrance-level training program or a separate training activity provided by a law enforcement agency.
- (c) Shall be no less than the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC)-required duration.
- (d) Shall be monitored by a certified deputy, the Sheriff or the authorized designee. Trainees shall be under the direct supervision of an FTO or other approved deputy as provided in COMAR 12.04.01.17(G).
- (e) Should include procedures for:
 - 1. Issuance of training materials to each trainee at the beginning of his/her field training.
 - 2. Daily evaluation and documentation of the trainee's performance during phases II, III and IV.
- (f) A multiphase structure that includes:
 - 1. A formal evaluation progress report completed by the FTOs involved with the trainee and submitted to the FTO coordinator.
 - 2. Assignment of the trainee to a variety of shifts and geographical areas.
 - 3. Assignment of the trainee to a rotation of FTOs in order to provide for an objective evaluation of the trainee's performance.
 - 4. Extension of the field training, if warranted, based on the trainee's performance.
 - 5. The trainee's confidential evaluation of his/her assigned FTOs and the field training process.
- (g) Retention of all field training documentation in the deputy trainee's training file for a minimum of 3 years, including (COMAR 12.04.01.17(H)):
 - 1. Agency's written policy for field training; All performance evaluations.
 - 2. The tests, test scores, and evaluations;
 - 3. Description of evaluation process;
 - 4. Field training lesson plans and guides;
 - 5. An outline of the training for individuals;
 - 6. At least every two (2) weeks during the individual's field training, summaries of the performance of the individual;
 - 7. Field training officer's final competence report on individual; and
 - 8. Other documentation required by the Commission.

For procedures related to Field Training, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Field Training Program Structure](#)

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417.4 FTO PROGRAM MANAGER

The program manager will hold the rank of lieutenant. The assigned division commander will make his/her selection based on the lieutenant's experience and interest in the program.

The program manager will keep the division commander apprised of all aspects of the F.T.O. Program and meet with the division commander bi-monthly to ensure that all areas are being adequately covered.

The program manager is the liaison with the Southern Maryland Criminal Justice Academy.

417.5 FTO COORDINATOR

The Sheriff shall delegate certain responsibilities to an FTO coordinator. The coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Patrol Community Services Commander or the authorized designee (COMAR 12.04.01.17(C)).

The FTO coordinator may appoint a senior FTO or other designee to assist in the coordination of FTOs and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Coordinating with FTO Program Manager on assignment of trainees to FTOs.
- (b) Conducting FTO meetings.
- (c) Maintaining and ensuring FTO and trainee performance evaluations are completed.
- (d) Maintaining, updating and issuing office training materials to each FTO and trainee.
- (e) Developing ongoing training for FTOs.
- (f) Mentoring and supervising individual FTO performance.
- (g) Monitoring the overall performance of field training.
- (h) Keeping the Shift Supervisor informed through Daily Observation Reports and End of Phase reports about the trainees' progress.
- (i) Maintaining liaison with FTO coordinators from other law enforcement agencies.
- (j) Maintaining liaison with sheriff's academy staff on recruit deputy performance during academy attendance.
- (k) Performing other activities as may be directed by the Patrol Community Services Commander.
- (l) Forwarding all necessary information to the Training Coordinator to ensure a written statement is completed and forwarded to the MPTSC for each recruit upon successful completion of field training (COMAR 12.04.01.17(G)).
- (m) Establishing guidelines and procedures for the evaluation of FTOs and trainees (COMAR 12.04.01.17(F)).

For procedures related to FTO Coordinator, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Field Training Coordinator and Program Manager](#) and [Release or Termination](#)

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417.5.1 FTO COORDINATOR TRAINING

The FTO coordinator is required to successfully complete the following courses prior to appointment to this position (COMAR 12.04.01.17(C)):

- (a) An MPTSC-approved supervisor training course.
- (b) An MPTSC-approved FTO course.

417.6 FTO SELECTION, TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

417.6.1 SELECTION PROCESS

The selection of an FTO will be at the discretion of the Sheriff or the authorized designee. Selection will come from the following:

- (a) The recommendation of the shift supervisors and shift commander in consultation with the Patrol Community Services Commander.
- (b) Experience, which shall include a minimum of being a police officer for at least two (2) years immediately prior to being approved by the Commission to be a field training officer. (COMAR 12.04.01.17(D)).
- (c) Demonstrated an above average aptness at building skills in leadership, motivation, evaluation and teaching peers.
- (d) Demonstrated consistent above average performance in communication skills, job knowledge, technical skills and personal appearance, as well as exhibited the ability to positively influence subordinates.
- (e) Be above average in initiative and ingenuity, and in his/her performance of duty.
- (f) At the request of the Patrol Community Services Commander , supervisors will complete and forward the Field Training Officer Recommendation Form, SMCSO Form # 199, submitting the names of any deputies interested in becoming a FTO and demonstrating the above qualities, who the supervisor feels would be a good candidate for consideration as an Field Training Officer.
- (g) Possession of, or ability to obtain, office-approved certification.
- (h) Approval by the MPTSC as aFTO (COMAR 12.04.01.17(D)).

An FTO must remain in good standing and may be relieved from FTO duties due to discipline, inappropriate conduct or poor performance.

417.6.2 TRAINING

A deputy selected as an FTO shall successfully complete an MPTSC-approved minimum 21-hour FTO course prior to being assigned as an FTO (COMAR 12.04.01.17(D)).

All agency FTOs shall attend four (4) hours of in-service training each calendar year that will be related to the Field Training Program. To remain certified and eligible to act as an FTO, a total of seven (7) hours of in-service must be attended every four (4) years (COMAR 12.04.01.17 (D)).

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417.6.3 TRAINING MATERIALS

The FTO shall receive training materials outlining the requirements, expectations and objectives of the FTO position. FTOs should refer to their training materials or the FTO coordinator regarding specific questions related to FTO or field training.

417.6.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the FTO include, but are not limited to (COMAR 12.04.01.17(F)):

- (a) Issuing his/her assigned trainee field training materials in accordance with the Training Policy.
 - 1. The FTO shall ensure that the trainee has the opportunity to become knowledgeable of the subject matter and proficient with the skills as set forth in the training materials.
 - 2. The FTO shall sign off all completed topics contained in the training materials, noting the methods of learning and evaluating the performance of his/her assigned trainee.
- (b) Completing and reviewing daily performance evaluations with the trainee each day.
- (c) Completing and submitting an evaluation on the performance of his/her assigned trainee to the FTO coordinator on a daily basis.
- (d) Providing the shift supervisor with a verbal synopsis of the trainee's activities at the end of each day or during any unusual occurrence needing guidance or clarification.

For procedures related to FTO Responsibilities, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Reports](#)