

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
PAROLE DIVISION**



**POLICY AND  
OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: PD/POP-1.1.1**

**DATE: 10/17/13**

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**SUPERSEDES: 08/31/11**

**SUBJECT:** PAROLE DIVISION TRAINING STANDARDS

**AUTHORITY:** TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE § 508.113

**PURPOSE:** To establish training requirements for employees of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Parole Division (TDCJ-PD), and identify those training programs that shall be approved by the Parole Division.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Division Recognized Training: Training shall be job-related to the functions performed by the employee; have stated learning objectives; provide a skill or knowledge that reinforces a required job-related function; and is approved by the Division Director. Division Recognized Training includes the Parole Officer Training Academy (POTA), Specialized Officer Supervision School (SOSS), In-Service Training, Unit Supervisors Course, Parole Supervisors Course, and other Division Director-approved trainings. The training shall be considered agency business, and attendees shall be released from their duty assignments for the duration of the training session.

Field Parole Officer Series: Parole Officer V (Assistant Region Director), Parole Officer IV (parole supervisor), Parole Officer III (unit supervisor), Parole Officer II, and Parole Officer I.

**PROCEDURE:**

**I. COURSE SCHEDULING**

No later than August 15th of each fiscal year, the Training Section supervisor shall submit a schedule to the Parole Division–Executive Management for review and approval. The schedule shall include dates for Annual Office Reviews, POTA, SOSS, In-Service Training, and Parole Division Staff Development Courses. The final schedule shall be approved no later than September 1st of each fiscal year.

## II. PAROLE OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY (POTA)

- A. Field Parole Officer Series staff shall successfully complete the assigned POTA as a condition of employment. Additional staff may be designated to attend as determined by the Division Director or designee (Deputy Director).
- B. No earlier than five (5) business days prior to the beginning of a new POTA class, the Program Supervisor V or designee (Program Supervisor III) shall review the Parole Division policies for revisions and ensure that all policy revisions are reflected in the existing training material for the scheduled POTA class.
- C. The Program Supervisor V or Program Supervisor III shall attend policy review staff meetings when changes or new policies are addressed. Once a policy has been approved, the Program Supervisor V or Program Supervisor III shall ensure that the policy is reviewed for impact upon existing lesson plans. The training materials will be updated to comply with policy revisions. In the event a change in policy occurs after the affected block of instruction at POTA has been completed, the class shall be informed of the changes prior to POTA completion and documented in the class folder.
- D. The Program Supervisor V or Program Supervisor III shall review all course evaluations within five (5) business days of receipt. Any noted issues shall be addressed by the Program Supervisor V. Each quarter, the Program Supervisor V shall submit a summary of results with any recommended curriculum changes to the Deputy Director of Management Operations.
- E. At least one (1) survey shall be sent to all POTA graduates within 180 days of graduation. The survey shall contain questions pertaining to the quality and content of the training. The POTA attendees shall complete course evaluations while attending POTA. A summary of the survey, along with any recommended curriculum changes, shall be forwarded to the Deputy Director of Management Operations on a quarterly basis.

## III. SPECIALIZED OFFICER SUPERVISION SCHOOL (SOSS)

- A. The Region Director shall select the most qualified parole officers to supervise a specialized caseload. Qualifications shall include current parole officer experience, previous SOSS completion, performance evaluations, and may include specific degrees, certifications, licenses, training, and prior experience that would benefit the caseload.
- B. Justification shall be maintained by the Region Director for any parole officers that may meet the qualifications to supervise the specialized caseload and are not selected.
- C. The Region Director shall ensure an adequate number of parole officers are pre-trained so that clients assigned to a specialized caseload are supervised according to the guidelines, and all duties and responsibilities are completed in the absence of the primary parole officer.

The Region Director shall provide justification to the Deputy Director of Field Operations when a parole officer is assigned to a specialized caseload and was not pre-trained (e.g., staff turnover, inadequate number of training slots available, etc.).

- D. Approved absences for SOSS shall be approved by the appropriate Region Director, Section Director, or Training Supervisor.

#### IV. ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- A. All field Parole Officer Series staff and any other staff designated by the Parole Division Director, Deputy Director, or Region/Section Director shall successfully complete a minimum of 40 hours of Division Recognized Training each fiscal year. An employee that successfully completed POTA during the current fiscal year shall complete the next In-Service Training scheduled for their respective assigned office, unless the appropriate Region Director authorizes attendance at an alternate location.
- B. All field clerical and administrative staff shall successfully complete a minimum of 16 hours of Division Recognized Training each fiscal year.
- C. The Training Section shall offer the training participants course work necessary to meet the In-Service Training requirements. The training curriculum shall be evaluated and updated on an annual basis.
- D. An In-Service Training Needs Assessment Survey shall be conducted each year to assist in determining In-Service Training needs. The Training Section supervisor shall distribute the survey and compile all responses to the completed survey.
  - 1. The Training Section supervisor shall consolidate the training needs identified in the assessment survey with any training needs identified by the Parole Division.
  - 2. The results of the needs assessment shall be compiled and reviewed by the Training Section supervisor with training recommendations forwarded through the Deputy Director of Management Operations to Executive Management for approval.
- E. Staff and unit meetings will constitute approved training.
- F. Employees shall attend all assigned training unless approved by the Division Director or designee (Deputy Director). No credit shall be allowed for repeating a training course or session, unless that training is specifically mandated (e.g., AIDS, sexual harassment, refresher courses, etc.).
- G. The Training Section supervisor shall have approved lesson plans developed prior to the beginning of In-Service Training.
- H. Approved absences for In-Service Training shall be approved by the appropriate Region Director, Section Director, or the Training Section supervisor.

## V. PAROLE DIVISION STAFF DEVELOPMENT COURSES

- A. Unit Supervisors Course – provides first line supervisors with the skills, knowledge, and abilities to effectively supervise staff and resources. The objectives for the course are to enhance the supervisor’s abilities as a leader/manager and to recognize characteristics of effective first-line supervision.
  - 1. Unit supervisors are required to successfully complete the course no later than six (6) months from the effective date of their promotion. Those required to attend shall be identified by Human Resources.
  - 2. All other first line supervisors shall attend when authorized by the appropriate Section Director or Region Director.
  - 3. A minimum of two (2) classes shall be scheduled per fiscal year.
- B. Parole Supervisors Course – provides second line supervisors with essential tools associated with mid-level management. The objective is to expand their views and challenge supervisory skills.
  - 1. Parole supervisors are required to attend no later than one (1) year from the effective date of their promotion. Those required to attend shall be identified by Human Resources.
  - 2. All other second line supervisors shall attend when authorized by the appropriate Section Director or Region Director.
  - 3. A minimum of one (1) class shall be scheduled per fiscal year.
- C. Advanced Coursework – any other course that has been designed to develop staffs’ skills in an area, such as leadership or management. These courses may include, but are not limited to, Advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) School, Electronic Monitoring/Super-Intensive Supervision Program (EM/SISP), Supervisors Workshop, and Sex Offender Supervisor Workshop.
- D. Only the appropriate Region Director, Section Director, or Training Section supervisor may approve absences from staff development courses.

## VI. TDCJ AND EXTERNAL TRAINING

- A. Any request to attend training outside of the Division Recognized Training on agency time or at agency expense must be approved through established TDCJ procedures.

- B. If approved for external training, Parole Division staff shall submit the verification of approved training, with verification of completion of the training attached, to the Training Section supervisor. In order to obtain training credit, the following documentation is required:
1. Title of the training program
  2. Training agenda
  3. Description of the training, including the topics or subject matter and learning/performance objectives
  4. Category of training (e.g., safety, substance abuse, etc.)
  5. Number of hours being requested, including actual hours of attendance
  6. Beginning and ending date(s) and time(s)
  7. Trainer(s) and their credentials
  8. Successful completion of the course, along with certificate of completion or other verification of attendance

## VII. TRAINING RECORDS DOCUMENTATION

- A. The POTA Supervisor and the Training Section Supervisor shall ensure that class training documentation is updated, closed, and maintained in a training database for all Division Recognized Training (POTA, In-Service Training, SOSS, Professional Development, etc.).
1. Class records must be completed within five (5) business days from the class completion date.
  2. All POTA records, SOSS records, and any other training records for training that are completed at the POTA complex shall be maintained at the POTA headquarters.
  3. All In-Service Training records, Professional Development training records, and any other training records for training that were not completed at the POTA complex shall be maintained by the Training Section supervisor.
- B. Training records documentation that shall be maintained includes all of the following:
1. Final class schedule
  2. Daily roll call rosters (including absences and make-ups)

3. Score sheet(s), if applicable
4. Student critique sheets
5. Course evaluations
6. Class completion roster
7. Miscellaneous correspondence

#### VIII. CANCELLATION AND EMPLOYEE EXEMPTION OF A SCHEDULED TRAINING CLASS

- A. Any modification/changes, including a reduction in training hours and all substitutions to the minimum of 40 hours of Division Recognized Training and/or minimum of 16 hours of clerical and administrative staff training, shall be authorized by the Division Director or Deputy Director.
- B. In the event a scheduled Division Recognized Training requires rescheduling or cancellation, authorization shall be obtained from the Deputy Director of Management Operations.
- C. Employees or groups of employees may be exempt from required training for good cause (e.g., medical conditions that prevent the employee from completing the required number of training hours, hurricane/natural disaster preparation/recovery, etc.). Authorization shall be obtained from the Deputy Director of Management Operations.

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