



P.O.S.T. Update

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The Help Desk is Now Open

Georgia POST Council has launched a new service to assist officers and others in getting faster responses. The new HELP DESK phone number to contact POST is 770-732-5604 and the new HELP DESK email is helpdesk@gapost.org. POST Council has staff members handling these phone calls and emails daily, and a voice mail service has also been implemented specifically for the help desk. Staff members endeavor to promptly respond to phone calls, emails, and voice mails during their assigned time to the HELP DESK. A new auto attendant phone system is being used to help callers route their calls more efficiently.

Online Training Issues

POST Council and some agency heads have discovered several officers that "sped through" online training classes offered in GPSTC's Independent Online Learning system. As a result of this discovery, GPSTC has updated the system to address this issue, added an ethics statement to the access area, and assisted in providing information on officers' run times in the independent online learning training system.

Some agency heads have requested their officers to "self-identify" their actions in speeding through the training and improperly getting POST credit without properly completing the course in the time required. With self identification, the agency heads have taken actions to have the officers' improper POST training credit to be removed by notifying POST of the officers & their specific training, not allowed these officers to take "on-line training" independently (or not at all), and have applied any other agency actions as deemed appropriate. POST investigations will be opened on any officers that have been identified in these types of acts by their agency heads, and the employing agency's action will be a factor in the POST Council's review of these cases.

If officers have training removed from their POST training history that cause the officer to be deficient for that year, the officer's certification could be suspended for failure to complete the required annual training, and the officer may have to apply for a training waiver.

Officers' failure to properly complete any "online learning" as required under POST rules may jeopardize an officer's career, a criminal case, and subject the officer to potential liability claims in some instances. Agency heads should review their officers' training records and look for potential signs of abuse of this system such as how many independent online learning training classes has an individual officer completed in one day. GPSTC and POST staff will gladly assist in providing details on the officer's access to the system to assist agencies in determining any impropriety on the part of the officer.

Suspensions of Peace Officer Certifications for Failure to Complete Required Annual Training

For the year 2013, over 4000 peace officers had their certifications suspended for failure to complete the required annual training for calendar year 2013. Most of these officers are not currently working in law enforcement. However, this fact should be considered when employing any new peace officers. As of January 1, 2014, POST Council has added the "career" button under the dashboard on any officer's demographics page in the POST Data Gateway system. By clicking on this career button, agencies can quickly see if an officer may have any training deficiencies.

Law Changes in 2013

The following law changes were made:

- The Entrance Exam waiting period for officers that fail the Entrance Exam is no longer 180 days (6 months), but it has been reduced to 30 days. Officers that fail an entrance exam for access to a basic academy must wait 30 days from the test date to re-test & submit a passing score for their POST certification application.
- Peace officers graduating before April 1st no longer have to get the required annual training as required prior to 2013. The law changed so that officers graduating from a basic peace officer course at any time during the calendar year will satisfy the training requirement for that year.
- "**Retired peace officer**" has been defined in the POST Act as follows:

"Retired peace officer" means a retired law enforcement officer who, prior to his or her retirement from service with the state or a subdivision or municipality thereof, was a peace officer within the meaning of such term as defined in paragraph (8) of this Code section. A retired peace officer may be certified or registered upon voluntarily complying with the certification or registration provisions of this chapter. Such term shall also mean a retired law enforcement officer who retired from service with the United States who meets all criteria as specified by the council for such classification; provided, however, that such classification shall not exempt such officer from satisfying the minimum employment and training requirements of this chapter if such officer is appointed or employed as a peace officer by the state or a subdivision or municipality thereof.

The important aspect that retiring officers must remember that a "career retirement" from one law enforcement agency to go to work at another law enforcement agency may not be applicable to training waiver career retirement options. The training waiver career retirement option is for officers that are no longer working in law enforcement and have retired to end their career in law enforcement.