



P.O.S.T. Update

June 2011

Ken Vance – Executive Director

Letter from the Executive Director:

The quarterly meeting of the Peace Officers Standards and Training Council was held June 8th here in Austell and I'd like to share a few comments about the "goings on."

First I'd like to recognize **Sheriff Gene Pope**, **Chief Woodrow Blue**, and **Warden Billy Howell** who are rotating off of the council by virtue of their positions with the Sheriff's, Chief's, and Warden's associations. These men did an outstanding job representing their respective associations because they did their homework and contributed when the time came. Y'all know that there are folks that get a position and don't do much after that, but not these three. They didn't miss a meeting and made a positive effort at all times, and I am sure that their replacements: **Sheriff Scott Berry**, **Chief Stan York**, and **Warden Belinda Davis** will do the same this upcoming year because each has attended every meeting this past year to observe and learn in order to hit the ground running.

Change in Minimum Score for COMPASS Writing Portion

Effective January 1, 2012, the minimum score for the writing portion of the COMPASS exam will be increased from 23 to 32.

As y'all will recall, the POST Council adopted the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) ASSET and COMPASS test as the official entrance exam in December of 2008 and it has worked very well. Earlier this year an independent, not-for-profit organization reassessed the writing portion of the exam and recommended that TCSG raise the "cut" score from 23 to 32. The POST Council adopted this same standard and it will go into effect January 1, 2012.

Approved Rule Changes

A summary of the changes are:

- The appeal process will be a one-step process with thirty (30) days to complete the step.
- Employing agencies and arresting agencies will be required to notify POST Council within fifteen (15) days of any arrest of a certified officer.
- Peace Officers certified after January 1, 2012 will be required to apply for recertification every four (4) years from the initial date of certification.
- The voluntary certification for chaplains is discontinued.

Notification Required by Employing Agency. Amended.

There are 4 times when an agency MUST REPORT an officer's status to POST:

1. If the officer is suspended 30 days or longer, demoted for other than administrative purposes, discharging an applicant/ candidate or certified officer for disciplinary reasons or accepting resignations in lieu of termination, the agency must report this to POST within 15 days of the action and make the complete investigative file available to the POST investigator.
2. Employing agencies must inform Council within 15 days of any additional change of status of an officer including hiring, resignation, name or address change, promotion and change in educational status.
3. Employing agencies must inform POST of an officer's or candidate/applicant's arrest within 15 days.
4. Medical disability

Folks, if you will make these steps a part of your checklist of "things to do when..." (and you can do this by E-MAIL and even easier in the new software) the POST process will certainly work smoother.

NEW RULE: Notification of Officer Arrest

Agencies arresting either a certified or applicant/candidate for anything other than minor traffic violations shall notify POST within 15 days of the incident and make the arrest records available to a POST investigator. This includes arrests by local, state, or federal authorities or indictments in any state or federal court.

This rule allows POST to hopefully close the loop left open by the "Employing Agency" rule. Again, you can do this via e-mail.

Officer Recertification was passed unanimously by the Council and it will work like this:

- a- All peace officers certified after January 1, 2012 will be required for recertification every 4 years from the initial date of certification.
- b- All applicants for recertification shall be due on the last day of the month of (initial) certification and may be submitted up to 90 days prior to the recertification date.
- c- All applications for recertification shall be submitted on forms approved by the Council.
- d- Failure to comply with this rule will result in the officer's certification expiring and authorization to serve as a peace officer in the State of Georgia suspended until such time as the officer meets the requirements established by Council for recertification.
- e- Officer recertification shall not be used in lieu of a petition for reinstatement of certification or reconsideration of application.

Note: There will be a nominal fee associated with the recertification process. The responsibility for payment of this fee will be the officer/certification holder. Agencies will not be held responsible for an employee's lack of payment or failure to apply for an officer's recertification.

Additionally, it will be at least January of 2016 before any applications for recertification will be made. There will certainly be more on this in the coming months.

Chaplain Certification Discontinued

POST Council voted to discontinue certifying Chaplains. The prevailing comment was that the naming of a departmental chaplain was a local issue and training would be handled by the sheriffs and chiefs associations.

Hearing Requests

POST Certification holders have 30 calendar days to request both a hearing and file their answer under oath to any adverse action taken by POST.

POST will continue to mail by certified mail those notifications to the last known address that POST has and this will constitute proper service under the law, so it's your responsibility to keep POST informed of any change of your address.

“New” News

POST has begun to let probation and suspension of certifications begin with Council action and the payment of the probation monitoring fee of \$50.00 per 12 months of probation or suspension. (Example: 24 months probation equates to a \$100.00 monitoring fee.) Please understand that the probation will not begin until the appropriate monitoring fee is paid. Historically, probation and suspension would begin when the person was re-hired. This required POST to keep up with these disciplinary records until the re-hire occurred, if it ever occurred. Officers can still appeal probation and/or suspension without paying the monitoring fee up front. In this case the action and monitoring fee would begin after the appeal process. The new process is certainly faster for those officers who just want to “take their medicine” so to speak and move on with their career.

This does NOT apply to the immediate suspension given to those peace officers who are either arrested or indicted for a felony. Our thinking is that the officer can do the prescribed probation and/or suspension in a defined time rather than having it kick in upon rehire. It will help our records process as well.

The new term is “Okey.”

New POST Records Software

Academies are currently being trained on the software, and once academies have tested aspects of the software, training for agencies will begin during the month of July. Please watch the POST website for notices of training on the software within the coming weeks. **The anticipated date of launch for the new software is September 1, 2011.**

In the past we have had numerous complaints about POST's continued use and reliance upon an officer's social security number as their record identifier. To correct this, POST is switching to the **Okey** (officer key) for officer identifier purposes. Please know that agencies can also use the barcode format under CODE 39, our industry standard, for barcode scanning systems, and programs that generate CODE 39 barcodes are free on the internet. A vendor recently mis-quoted POST and implied that you had to purchase their barcode ID cards. Please understand that as long as you use the CODE 39 format you can purchase cards from anyone or even do your own. With the new computer system, use of a barcode is just one of several methods for putting an officer on the roster. In any event, POST is quickly moving away from “socials.” If you have questions, please contact either POST, GACP, GSA, or the Warden's Association.

Certifications & Training Requirements

Agencies will be receiving notifications regarding officers that are identified that may not have completed the process for certification (i.e. not submitting fingerprint results to complete their application) or ones that have not completed any annual training requirements/obtained the required training waivers. It is important that agencies and officers respond promptly to get these issues.

Finally POST is in the process of notifying agencies of possible officer training deficiencies. Our depleted staff is taking on this project because we really feel that some agencies are not tracking officer training in a timely manner and many don't have a training officer. I'm not going to criticize, but we all know the consequences of lack of training both for the officer and the agency. Yes, it is the responsibility of the officer to get his or her annual training hours, but the media won't ask the officer why they didn't get their training, they'll ask you why the officer(s) in your

department didn't get training. I'm certainly not saying that that's fair, but I can tell you it does happen.

Folks, it is our honor here at POST to serve the law enforcement community in Georgia. We're a small agency with a huge responsibility and to be sure, the employees at POST are trying to do their very best for y'all everyday. May the Good Lord Bless You and Keep you Safe!

Reminder: Curriculum Change for Radar Recertification

Effective March 10, 2011, the curriculum for the Radar Recertification course (course code UTT02R) is changed to ***remove the examination*** at the end of this course. Agencies can teach the radar recertification course which is now ***only 3 hours in length***. Instructors must obtain the course materials from either a POST certified academy or POST Council. Once a course is taught, the instructor can send the Course Completion Report (C12) to POST to obtain the radar recertification cards for the students completing the training course. If it is taught at an academy, the academy will provide the recertification cards and enter the training for the officers completing the course. POST certified speed detection instructors will be able to sign the C12 to get POST credit for the radar recertification course as a student since there is no longer an examination requirement.

Senate Bill 95

On May 12, 2011, Governor Deal signed Senate Bill 95. This bill relates to the employment of peace officers and provides the authority to investigate the employment history of an applicant applying for appointment or certification as a peace officer. It also provides immunities relating to the release of information from former employers regarding past employment. Effective date of this bill is May 12, 2011. See the POST web site Notices, www.gapost.org, for more details and sample forms.