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THE SYSTEM OF POLICE TRAINING IN THE US

There are 18, 000 separate and distinct policing agencies and about 1 million police employees. Almost 700 police academies provide basic police training. About 40% of academies are singleagency, 60% are regional or state. Average academy length is 21 weeks.

Over 800 colleges and universities offer 4-year criminal justice degrees. Over 1 000 colleges offer 2-year degrees in criminal justice or law enforcement.

Education and training are mostly separate, even though nearly 50% of police academies are located on college campuses (mainly at 2-year colleges). Higher education is controlled by colleges and universities. Training standards are set by state governments.

Academy training in the United States is provided at the federal, state and local levels. At the national level, there is FBI Academy and other Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers. At the state level, each state has its own training academy and the training takes 12 to 26 weeks. Apparently, there is a wide range of variation in the total number of hours of training at the academy from state to state in the United States. At the state level, basic academy training ranges between 280 and 1032 hours long in the United States. Basic academy program is a standardized program to regulate the minimum level of training in each state. For example, Minnesota has 280 hours and Hawaii has 1032 hours of basic academy training program. California, Ohio, and Kentucky are

the important states in terms of police training because they set the first standards in the USA. In 1959, for example, the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) were established in California to create a standard for basic police training in the state. Since then, this regulation has been adopted by all states. Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission was established six years after the POST in 1965 to set the police training standards for Ohio law enforcement community. At the local level, large cities have their own academy and some universities have police training academies to serve the training needs of the police in their region. All local or state level academies have to meet the minimum requirements of the state police training commission. However, police academies tend to go well beyond these minimum standards. For instance, even though Ohio Commission has set 550 hours as the minimum amount of training for basic training, Ohio State Highway Patrol requires a 1071-hour-training-program at the Highway Patrol Academy. Besides, Columbus, the capital city of Ohio, adopted a similar policy at its Police Academy with a 1005- hour-long program.

In terms of the field training in the United States, cadets are required to spend a 12-week-field-training with a Field Training Officer (FTO) just after their graduation. FTOs are those who are among the most successful police officers during their careers. A specially trained officer is assigned for each probationer to help him adapt to policing. There are Field Training Coordinators who coordinate activity between FTOs, Patrol Zone Commanders, and the Training Bureau. FTOs give three different evaluation reports to the Field Training Coordinators about the Field Trainee. The trainees' startpatrolling with the FTO until they become successful in functioning the daily police work alone. Based on those evaluation reports, if a trainee fails, the FTO may require the trainee to take additional courses back at the academy.

Generally speaking, in-service training programs in the United States are offered by police academies. They announce their inservice training programs by publishing the schedule of courses, course descriptions, and costs. Although attending in-service

programs is voluntary, officers are encouraged to take as many courses as possible. Sometimes departments might require specific courses for certain duties. Further, if an officer fails to accomplish some tasks they are obliged to take relative in-service training courses. Specialized training programs in the United States, on the other hand, are offered to train special personnel such as detectives, technical crash investigators, and special response team members and so on.

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