



# Law Enforcement Training Requirements

**SAFE-T ACT**

**ACLU** Illinois

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# Law Enforcement Training Requirements

All law enforcement officers in Illinois are required to complete certain types of training before being certified and allowed to perform their duties. The Safety, Accountability, Fairness, and Equity Today (SAFE-T) Act – and follow up amendments – updated these requirements. These updated requirements were put in place to make sure that law enforcement officers are better able to perform their duties and improve the safety of all Illinoisans. This document includes an overview of the training Illinois law enforcement officers must complete, with changes in statutory language made by the SAFE-T Act italicized; a glossary of terms; and a checklist of training requirements based on the updated requirements in the SAFE-T Act.

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## Who Creates Law Enforcement Training?

Under our state law, the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) must create the training requirements that all law enforcement officers in Illinois must complete. ILETSB

and a standard curriculum requirement were in place before the SAFE-T Act, and have included requirements both for new, or probationary, officers and permanent officers who work full-time or part-time. As the group that creates training standards, ILETSB also creates standards for the types of training that law enforcement training academies and schools must provide to both probationary and permanent law enforcement officers. To be an active law enforcement officer, applicants and officers must get and maintain their certification, which requires meeting ILETSB's training standards. In addition to setting training standards, ILETSB also maintains a list of authorized training academies and schools.

The SAFE-T Act added a new duty to ILETSB's training standards: mental health screenings for both probationary and permanent officers.

- Powers and duties of the Board; selection and certification of schools. The Board shall select and certify schools within the State of Illinois for the purpose of providing basic training for probationary police officers, probationary county corrections officers, and court security officers and of providing advanced or in-service training for permanent police officers or permanent county corrections officers, which schools may be either publicly or privately owned and operated. In addition, the Board has the following power and duties: Grants under this Section may be used to offset data storage costs for officer-worn body cameras.
  - *To establish statewide standards for minimum standards regarding regular mental health screenings for probationary and permanent police officers, ensuring that counseling sessions and screenings remain confidential.*<sup>1</sup> (sections that were not changed by the SAFE-T Act not included)

While ILETSB creates standards for training, law enforcement agencies and departments must make sure that officers are

compliant with training requirements. The SAFE-T Act added a new provision that makes sure that the Illinois State Police are also compliant with training standards and requirements.

- *Mandated training compliance. The Director of the Illinois State Police and the Illinois State Police Academy shall ensure all Illinois State Police cadets and officers comply with all statutory, regulatory, and department mandated training.*<sup>2</sup>

Law enforcement agencies must give their officers the chance to complete required training, including providing training at no cost to the officers.

- *All law enforcement officers must report the completion of the training requirements required in this Act in compliance with Section 8.4 of this Act.*<sup>3</sup>
- *Each employing governmental agency shall allow and provide an opportunity for a law enforcement officer to complete the mandated requirements in this Act.*<sup>4</sup> *All mandated training will be provided for at no cost to the employees. Employees shall be paid for all time spent attending mandated training.*<sup>5</sup>

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## What Are the New Training Topics?

The SAFE-T Act updated what type of training officers must complete, when they must complete it, and how often they must be trained. The SAFE-T Act created new requirements for the curriculum for probationary officers. These new standards include hands-on, scenario-based role-playing, use of force techniques, safety techniques, and traffic stops.

- *The curriculum for probationary police officers shall include: (1) at least 12 hours of hands-on, scenario-based role-playing; (2) at least 6 hours of instruction on use*

*of force techniques, including the use of de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force whenever safe and feasible; (3) specific training on officer safety techniques, including cover, concealment, and time; and (4) at least 6 hours of training focused on high-risk traffic stops.*<sup>6</sup>

Probationary officer curriculums at ILETSB-certified schools must also include crisis intervention training.

- The curriculum for probationary police officers which shall be offered by all certified schools shall include, but not be limited to, courses of procedural justice, arrest and use and control tactics, search and seizure, including temporary questioning, civil rights, human rights, human relations, cultural competency, including implicit bias and racial and ethnic sensitivity, criminal law, law of criminal procedure, constitutional and proper use of law enforcement authority, *crisis intervention training*, vehicle and traffic law including uniform and non-discriminatory enforcement of the Illinois Vehicle Code, traffic control and accident investigation.<sup>7</sup>

Like probationary officers, permanent law enforcement officers must complete 30 hours of training that includes hands-on, scenario-based role-playing, use of force techniques, training on stops and searches, safety techniques, and traffic stops.

- *Mandatory training to be completed every 3 years. The Board shall adopt rules and minimum standards for in-service training requirements as set forth in this Section. The training shall provide officers with knowledge of policies and laws regulating the use of force; equip officers with tactics and skills, including de-escalation techniques, to prevent or reduce the need to use force or, when force must be used, to use force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional under the totality of the circumstances; and ensure appropriate supervision and accountability. The training shall include:*

- *At least 12 hours of hands-on, scenario-based role-playing.*
- *At least 6 hours of instruction on use of force techniques, including the use of de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force whenever safe and feasible.*
- *Specific training on the law concerning stops, searches, and the use of force under the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.*
- *Specific training on officer safety techniques, including cover, concealment, and time.*
- *At least 6 hours of training focused on high-risk traffic stops.<sup>8</sup>*

In-service training requirements – or the training that officers must complete to maintain their certification as law enforcement officers – must now include implicit bias and racial and ethnic sensitivity training.

- Minimum in-service training requirements, which a police officer must satisfactorily complete every 3 years. Those requirements shall include constitutional and proper use of law enforcement authority, procedural justice, civil rights, human rights, reporting child abuse and neglect, and cultural competency, *including implicit bias and racial and ethnic sensitivity.*<sup>9</sup>

Officers must complete emergency medical response training and certification, crisis intervention training, and officer wellness and mental health training.

- Minimum in-service training requirements, which a police officer must satisfactorily complete at least annually. Those requirements shall include law updates, *emergency medical response training and certification, crisis intervention training, and officer wellness and mental health.*<sup>10</sup>

The SAFE-T Act also requires officers to be trained to recognize mental health issues as part of crisis intervention training.

- The Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board shall develop and approve a standard curriculum for certified training programs in crisis intervention, *including a specialty certification course* of at least 40 hours addressing specialized policing responses to people with mental illnesses. The Board shall conduct *Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training programs that train officers to identify signs and symptoms of mental illness, to de-escalate situations involving individuals who appear to have a mental illness, and connect that person in crisis to treatment. Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training programs shall be a collaboration between law enforcement professionals, mental health providers, families, and consumer advocates and must minimally include the following components: (1) basic information about mental illnesses and how to recognize them; (2) information about mental health laws and resources; (3) learning from family members of individuals with mental illness and their experiences; and (4) verbal de-escalation training and role-plays.* Officers who have successfully completed this program shall be issued a certificate attesting to their attendance of a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program.<sup>11</sup>

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## How Often Are Officers Trained?

After their probationary period ends, law enforcement officers must complete the required training every three years to maintain their certification. These three-year cycles began in 2023 and rotate based on an officer's last name.

- Unless on inactive status under subsection (b) of Section 8.1 or subsection (b) of Section 8.2, every law enforcement officer subject to this Act shall submit a verification form that confirms compliance with this Act. The verification shall apply to the 3 calendar years preceding the date of verification. Law enforcement officers shall submit the officer's first report by January 30 during the initial three-year reporting period, as determined on the basis of the law enforcement officer's last name under paragraph (2) of this subsection then every third year of the officer's applicable three-year report period as determined by the Board. At the conclusion of each law enforcement officer's applicable reporting period, the chief administrative officer of the officer's governmental agency is to determine the compliance of each officer under this Section. An officer may verify their successful completion of training requirements with their governmental agency. Each law enforcement officer is responsible for reporting and demonstrating compliance to the officer's chief administrative officer.<sup>12</sup>*
- The applicable three-year reporting period shall begin on January 30, 2023 for law enforcement officers whose last names being with the letters A through G, on January 30, 2024 for law enforcement officers whose last names being with the letters H through O, and January 30, 2025 for law enforcement officers whose last names being with the letters P through Z.*

In addition to the training cycles above, the training mentioned above generally falls on a once per year or once every three years cycle. Every year, officers must complete emergency medical response training and certification, crisis intervention training, and officer wellness and mental health training.

- Minimum in-service training requirements, which a police officer must satisfactorily complete at least annually.

Those requirements shall include law updates, *emergency medical response training and certification, crisis intervention training, and officer wellness and mental health*.<sup>13</sup>

Every three years, officers must be trained on proper use of authority, civil rights, child abuse and neglect, cultural competency, implicit bias, and racial and ethnic sensitivity.

- Minimum in-service training requirements, which a police officer must satisfactorily complete every 3 years. Those requirements shall include constitutional and proper use of law enforcement authority, procedural justice, civil rights, human rights, reporting child abuse and neglect, and cultural competency, *including implicit bias and racial and ethnic sensitivity*.<sup>14</sup> These trainings shall consist of at least 30 hours of training every 3 years.<sup>15</sup>

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## What Changes Has ILETSB Made?

Following the SAFE-T Act becoming law, ILETSB posted a police reform training update (dated 4/16/21) sharing the minimum in-service training requirements that a law enforcement officer must complete at least annually. This update takes language from the SAFE-T Act to make the requirements easier to understand in terms of what is mandatory for law enforcement officers. Those requirements must include courses addressing law updates, *emergency medical response, crisis intervention, and officer wellness and mental health*. Additionally, mandatory training – to be completed every three years – *must consist of at least 30 hours of training, at least 12 hours of hands-on, scenario-based role-playing* and shall include:

- *At least 6 hours of instruction on use of force techniques, including the use of de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force whenever possible*

- *At least 6 hours of training focused on high-risk traffic stops*
- *Specific training on the law concerning stops, searches, and the use of force under the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution*
- *Specific training on officer safety techniques including cover, concealment, and time*
- *Cultural competency, including implicit bias and racial and ethnic sensitivity*
- Constitutional and proper use of law enforcement authority
- Procedural justice
- Civil rights
- Human rights
- Trauma informed response to sexual assault
- Reporting child abuse and neglect
- The psychology of domestic violence

One of the new requirements under the SAFE-T Act is the inclusion of scenario-based role-playing, which is when officers are given the opportunity to apply new skills in safe, structured environments, with scenarios based on real incidents and actors who are dressed accordingly – as opposed to wearing their law enforcement uniforms.

## Glossary

**Community caretaking function:** work that law enforcement officers do that does not include law enforcement-related encounters or activities.

**Full-time Law Enforcement Officer:** a law enforcement officer who has completed the officer's probationary period and is employed on a full-time basis as a law enforcement officer by a local government agency, State government agency, or as a campus police officer by a participating State-controlled university, college, or public community college.

**Law Enforcement Officer:** Someone who works full or part-time for a local, state, or college law enforcement agency and has completed training requirements for either a probationary or permanent period.

- **SAFE-T Act:** Any police officer of a law enforcement agency who is primarily responsible for prevention or detection of crime and the enforcement of the criminal code, traffic, or highway laws of this State of any political subdivision of this State or any member of a police force appointed and maintained as provided in Section 2 of the Railroad Police Act.
  - **Railroad Police Act:** Conductors of all railroad trains, and the captain or master of any boat carrying passengers within the jurisdiction of this State, are vested with police powers while on duty on their respective trains and boats, and may wear an appropriate badge indicative of this authority.

**Part-time Law Enforcement Officer:** a law enforcement officer who has completed the officer's probationary period and is employed on a part-time basis as a law enforcement officer by a participating unit of local government or as a

campus police officer by a participating State-controlled university, college, or public community college.

**Permanent Law Enforcement Officer:** a law enforcement officer who has completed the officer's probationary period and is permanently employed on a full-time basis as a local law enforcement officer by a participating local governmental unit or as a security officer or campus police officer permanently employed by a participating State-controlled university, college, or public community college.

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- <sup>1</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>2</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>31</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>4</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>5</sup> Trailer Amendment 1 (HB3443, SA5; Public Act 102-0028)
- <sup>6</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>7</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
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- <sup>10</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>11</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652); Trailer Amendment 1 (HB3443, SA5; Public Act 102-0028)
- <sup>12</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>13</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>14</sup> SAFE-T Act (HB3653, SA2; Public Act 101-0652)
- <sup>15</sup> Trailer Amendment 1 (HB3443, SA5; Public Act 102-0028)

# Officer Training Checklist

Below is a checklist about training requirements based on the SAFE-T Act and Trailer Amendments. This checklist can be used as a tool to see if your local law enforcement agencies are following the SAFE-T Act's new training requirements for officers.

## **Probationary Officer Training**

- At least 12 hours of hands-on, scenario-based role-playing
- At least 6 hours of instruction on use of force techniques, including the use of de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force whenever safe and feasible
- Specific training on officer safety techniques, including cover, concealment, and time
- At least 6 hours of training focused on high-risk traffic stops

## **Permanent Officer Training**

### *Annual Training*

- Emergency medical response training and certification
- Crisis intervention training
- Officer wellness and mental health

### *Every Three-Year Training (30 hours)*

- At least 12 hours of hands-on, scenario-based role-playing
- At least 6 hours of instruction on use of force techniques, including the use of de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force whenever safe and feasible
- Specific training on the law concerning stops, searches, and the use of force under the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution

- Specific training on officer safety techniques, including cover, concealment, and time
- At least 6 hours of training focused on high-risk traffic stops
- Implicit bias and racial and ethnic sensitivity training

*Crisis Intervention Training (at least 40 hours)*

- Basic information about mental illnesses and how to recognize them
- Information about mental health laws and resources
- Learning from family members of individuals with mental illness and their experiences
- Verbal de-escalation training and role-plays



Find more information on this and other information about law enforcement at:

**[www.aclu-il.org/rights-SAFE-T](http://www.aclu-il.org/rights-SAFE-T)**



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