



# Virginia Department of Corrections

## Staff Training

### Operating Procedure 350.5

#### *Field Training Officer Program*

#### Authority:

Directive 350, *Staff Training*

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

**Amended:** 8/1/23

#### Supersedes:

New Procedure

**Access:**  Restricted  Public  Inmate

#### ACA/PREA Standards:

None

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### REVIEW

The Content Owner will review this operating procedure annually and re-write it no later than three years after the effective date.

*The content owner reviewed this operating procedure in June 2022 and determined that no changes are needed.*

*The content owner reviewed this operating procedure in July 2023 and necessary changes have been made.*

### COMPLIANCE

This operating procedure applies to all units operated by the Virginia Department of Corrections. Practices and procedures must comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, ACA standards, PREA standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Academy (ASD)** - Any DCJS certified training school operated by the DOC; includes the Academy for Staff Development - Central Campus (ASD-C), Academy for Staff Development - Western Campus (ASD-W), Academy for Staff Development - Eastern Campus (ASD-E), and satellite academies (including institutional training schools).

**Basic Corrections Officer Training (BCO)** - Training conducted at institutional training schools and ASD campuses to meet mandated training requirements for newly hired Corrections Officers.

**Certified Corrections Officer** - A Corrections Officer who has successfully completed all phases of BCO training, and whose *Basic Training Certification for Correctional Employees 350\_F37* has been signed by the Unit Head of the employing facility and forwarded to the ASD.

**DCJS Form 35 “Department of Corrections Certification Sheet for Officers”** - A form for tracking and documenting a new Corrections Officer’s completion of each phase of BCO training; must be completed for certification.

**DCJS Form 41 “Completion of Training”** - A form prepared by the ASD and submitted to DCJS to document completion of mandatory training requirements; not prepared or submitted by satellite academies.

**Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)** - The agency with statutory authority to establish compulsory minimum entry-level, in-service, and advanced training standards for Corrections Officers, and time limits for completion of such training; qualifications for certification of criminal justice instructors, and standards for criminal justice training centers.

**Field Training Officer (FTO)** - An experienced Corrections Officer selected and trained in supervising, training, and evaluating OITs in the application of their previously acquired knowledge and skills.

**Institutional Training Officer (ITO)** - The designated facility employee who is responsible for the overall management and coordination of training at a satellite academy.

**Mandated Training** - A training program mandated by state or federal law or regulations relative to the employee’s competency or certification to perform specific work functions.

**Officer-In-Training (OIT)** - A Corrections Officer who has not yet completed all phases of Basic Corrections Officer (BCO) training or whose DCJS Form 35 has not yet been signed by the Facility Unit Head and forwarded to the ASD.

**Required Training** - A training program required to meet established Department of Corrections policies and procedures or Department of Criminal Justice Services standards relative to the employee’s knowledge of and ability to perform work functions.

**Satellite Academy** - A training facility (normally at or in the vicinity of a major institution and referred to as an institutional training school), which operates under the authority of the Academy for Staff Development.

**Satisfactory Completion** - Full participation in a training program and demonstrated proficiency/skill competency related to the program’s learning objectives.

**Training** - A series of structured learning experiences, excluding academic or technical school course work, designed to help employees acquire or enhance their knowledge, skills, and ability to understand and effectively perform their specific work duties.



## PURPOSE

This operating procedure governs the administration and evaluation of field training for newly hired officers of the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC).

## PROCEDURE

### I. Field Training Officer (FTO) Program Administration

#### A. Overview

1. The Field Training Officer (FTO) Program provides a standardized program to facilitate the transition of an Officer-in-Training (OIT) from the academic setting to the actual performance of duties as a Corrections Officer in the DOC.
2. The FTO program provides structured on-the-job learning experiences where the OIT demonstrates competency in performance outcomes as outlined in the Code of Virginia, Virginia Administrative Code, and the regulations of the Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB).
3. The FTO training program provides a structured learning experience where an OIT demonstrates required competencies under the supervision of a certified FTO.
4. The FTO program is the fourth and final phase of the Basic Correctional Officer (BCO) training curriculum designed to comply with the compulsory minimum training standards outlined in 6VAC20-100-20, *Compulsory minimum training standards*. Each OIT completing Phase III will be assigned a FTO to support, train, and assist them as they integrate into the daily operations of the facility.
5. The FTO program is intended to support the development and retention of a well-trained security workforce. In addition to demonstrating competencies, OITs are provided instruction, encouragement, and correction so that they are able to work independently once certified.

### II. Facility Responsibilities

- A. Each facility is provided an established number of FTOs necessary to meet the operational needs of the facility. Facilities must stay within their predetermined number of active FTOs.
- B. Facilities should maintain a list of alternate FTOs to utilize in the event active FTOs are removed after selection.
- C. Facilities should select FTOs based on established eligibility and suitability criteria.
  1. Eligibility - Any officer selected as an FTO must meet the following criteria:
    - a. Be a certified Corrections Officer who has successfully completed probationary period.
    - b. Have consistently demonstrated acceptable work performance with a rating of "Contributor" or above on the last performance evaluation.
    - c. Demonstrated willingness and ability to work all shifts and posts.
    - d. Demonstrated history of consistent/reliable attendance. Reliable attendance refers to a pattern of attendance that does not interfere with the smooth operation of the facility.
    - e. Current on all required training certifications, to include mandatory weapons certification.
    - f. Have no active group notices or other active disciplinary actions in their record that would negatively affect their ability to serve as an FTO. If an FTO receives disciplinary action that affects their ability to serve as an FTO, they will be immediately removed from active FTO status. Once disciplinary action becomes inactive, they may reapply.
  2. Suitability
    - a. Possesses effective written and oral communication skills.
    - b. Conducts themselves as a role model, presents neat and professional uniform dress, appearance, and demeanor.



- c. Demonstrates the ability to perform complex or demanding assignments with minimal supervision.
  - d. Demonstrates conscientiousness and thoroughness in assigned duties and operates in compliance with current DOC procedures.
3. Waivers to the eligibility criteria listed above may be granted based on the opening of a new facility, employees who are impacted by reduction in workforce, or to meet other emergency FTO needs. The appropriate Regional Administrator, with notification to the Chief of Corrections Operations, will review requests for waivers on a case-by-case basis.

### III. Application and Selection Procedures

#### A. Facilities will use a standardized application and selection procedures for FTOs.

1. The Facility Unit Head should post an announcement for a minimum of two weeks notifying eligible staff of the opportunity to apply for consideration as a facility FTO.
2. Eligible Corrections Officer who have interest in serving as a FTO must complete the *FTO Application 350\_F28* and submit it through their supervisor, Unit Manager (if applicable) and Shift Commander for their recommendations.
3. The supervisor, Unit Manager, and Shift Commander's recommendations will be documented on the *Supervisory Review 350\_F29* and forwarded with the *FTO Application* to the Human Resource Officer who will review facility documentation and confirm the applicant meets all FTO eligibility criteria.
4. The Human Resource Officer will document their findings on the *Administrative Review 350\_F30* and will forward the *FTO Application*, *Supervisory Review*, and *Administrative Review* to the ITO for review.
5. The ITO will verify the applicant has successfully completed all mandatory training and will confirm completion of the training on the *Administrative Review*.
6. Qualified candidates at major institutions will be scheduled for an interview panel with the Chief of Security, Unit Manager, and ITO. Candidates at smaller units will be scheduled for an interview panel with the Chief of Security and a security supervisor.
7. Panel recommendations will be forwarded to the Warden or Superintendent as applicable for final review and selection.
8. The Facility Unit Head will have final authority on FTO selection and assignment. Assignment as an FTO may be revoked at any time by the appointing authority.

### IV. Training and Ongoing Requirements

- #### A. FTOs must complete initial and recertification training requirements as directed by the Academy for Staff Development.
- #### B. Each FTO must continue to meet the pre-established eligibility requirements and criteria in order to remain in an FTO role.
1. Maintain all initial eligibility requirements
  2. Complete the FTO recertification training once every two years
  3. Complete and pass weapons recertification
  4. Complete Effective Communication Training
  5. Attend mandatory training each year in communication, mentoring, and leadership or other related training

### V. FTO Responsibilities

- #### A. The FTO will serve as a professional and supportive role model for OITs, demonstrating work ethic and



sound knowledge of correctional practices and procedures.

- B. The FTO will supervise the OIT in demonstrating competency for the performance outcomes as outlined in the *Field Training Officer Handbook*. The FTO will provide training and demonstrate proper completion of tasks in order for OITs to learn how to successfully perform job duties.
- C. FTOs must provide instruction, encouragement, and correction so that OITs are able to demonstrate competencies and work independently once certified.
- D. In addition, FTOs are responsible for:
  - 1. Supervision and safety of the OIT
  - 2. Being a teacher/trainer for the OIT
  - 3. Providing a good role model to the OIT
  - 4. Evaluating the OIT in an honest, fair, and defensible manner
  - 5. Developing remedial training plans when needed
  - 6. Being an effective leader in the organization
  - 7. Accurately completing all required documentation
  - 8. Communicating concerns to appropriate supervisory and management staff

#### VI. FTO Program Documentation

- A. Upon completing Phase III of the BCO program, each OIT will be issued the current *Officer-In-Training Packet* as approved by the Academy for Staff Development. This packet is utilized to monitor and track the progression of an OIT throughout the field training process. The OIT must become knowledgeable of the subject matter and will become proficient with the skills/competencies as set forth in field training.
- B. The ITO will ensure that all FTOs are provided the current *Field Training Officer Handbook* as approved by the Academy for Staff Development. This handbook has been designed to be utilized as a guide and reference for the FTO to ensure that field training is conducted properly and uniformly across the agency. The handbook contains the following items:
  - 1. Guidance on field training process
  - 2. Mandatory posts and assignments for OITs
  - 3. Training standards with guidance notations
  - 4. Sample documents
- C. After the OIT has successfully completed a minimum of 200 hours of field training and demonstrated competency in all required performance outcomes, the Warden/Superintendent will certify completion on a *DCJS DOC-1 form*. In addition to the *DCJS Form 35*, the completed *DCJS DOC-1* form will be scanned and submitted to ASD within 10 days for official reporting to the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Original copies of all FTO documentation will be placed in the individuals training file.

#### VII. FTO Assessments

- A. Upon completion of their Phase IV training period, the OIT will complete an *OIT Training Assessment 350\_F31* for each FTO that worked with them. Completed assessments must be submitted to the ITO for review and monitoring.
- B. A bi-annual review of all facility FTOs will be conducted in order to verify the continued eligibility of each active FTO, to add new FTOs, and to remove inactive FTOs.
  - 1. The facility Human Resource Officer will coordinate the bi-annual review and confirm each FTOs continued eligibility.



2. As a part of the review process, the ITO or AITO and a security supervisor identified by the ITO will complete a *Supervisor/ITO/AITO Feedback 350\_F32* for each FTO under their supervision.
  3. The Chief of Security will review the *Supervisor/ITO/AITO Feedback 350\_F32*, all *OIT Training Assessment*, as well as any additional documentation such as disciplinary actions submitted for each FTO in order to ensure the officer continues to meet the eligibility requirements.
- C. The *OIT Training Assessment* and *Supervisor/ITO/AITO Feedback* must be submitted to the ITO who will retain a copy for the FTOs training record and forward the original to the Human Resource Officer for consideration during the bi-annual review.
- D. The ITO is responsible for monitoring the responses on the *OIT Training Assessment* and *Supervisor/ITO/AITO Feedback* and discussing the results of these assessments with the OIT and FTO, as needed. Further review and discussion should take place between ITO, OIT and FTO in the following cases:
1. FTO receives multiple "Sometimes" ratings - ITO will meet with the FTO to discuss ways they can improve the quality of their contribution.
  2. FTO receives a single "Not at all" or "Rarely" rating - ITO will meet with FTO to discuss ways they can improve the quality of their contribution.
  3. FTO receives multiple "Not at all" or "Rarely" ratings - ITO makes a referral to the Warden, who will meet with FTO to determine if they should be removed from the role or be allowed to continue. If allowed to continue, a specific improvement plan should be in effect for the FTO to improve their contribution.
  4. FTO receives "Not at all" or "Rarely" rating for two review periods - The ITO will refer this matter to the Warden who will determine if the FTO should be removed from the program. Generally, this situation warrants removal.

## REFERENCES

6VAC20-100-20, *Compulsory minimum training standards*

*Officer-in-Training Packet* (maintained by ASD Security Training Unit)

*Field Training Officer Handbook* (maintained by ASD Security Training Unit)

## ATTACHMENTS

None

## FORM CITATIONS

*FTO Application 350\_F28*

*Supervisory Review 350\_F29*

*Administrative Review 350\_F30*

*OIT Training Assessment 350\_F31*

*Supervisor/ITO/AITO Feedback 350\_F32*

*Basic Training Certification for Correctional Employees 350\_F37*

