



# National Association of Field Training Officers Indiana Chapter

## **Marion County Sheriff Department's Field Training Program For Detectives**

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The Investigations Division Field Training Officer Program in the Marion County Sheriff's Department is a planned approach to training and evaluation. It consists of the following three phases.

### **Program Phases**

*Phase One - Orientation:* This phase is approximately five days long. During this phase, the trainee is assigned to a Field Training Supervisor for introduction to the Investigation Division. The purpose of this orientation period is to allow the trainee to observe veteran detectives. The trainee is also introduced to the Field Training Officer Program. During this phase the trainee is not formally evaluated. The trainee reviews investigative procedures and receives instruction in basic report writing, case investigation, preparation for filing, investigative source research, intelligence sources and preparation of arrest and search warrants.

*Phase Two – Field Orientation / Regular Evaluation:* This phase is approximately three to four weeks long. The trainee is assigned to a Field Training Officer (FTO) and is oriented to investigative duties for the first two or three days. During this orientation, the trainee observes his FTO and is not evaluated. Upon completion of the orientation, the trainee starts to perform the duties of a detective and is evaluated each day by the Field Training Officer and each week by the Field Training Supervisor.

*Phase Three – Second Evaluation Solo-Duty Assignment.* The trainee is assigned to a second FTO and is oriented to this FTO and the FTO's assignment for the first two days. The trainee continues to perform the tasks he has been trained in thus far. The trainee is not evaluated during this orientation. During the next four weeks, the trainee performs the duties of a detective in the section to which he/she will be assigned to upon completion of the Field Training Program. The trainee is evaluated during this phase. The trainee performs without the assistance of his FTO. During this solo-duty period, the trainee is evaluated by his immediate supervisor. If the supervisor decides a trainee is in need of remedial training, the Division Chief will refer the trainee to the FTO Commander. A trainee maybe returned to the Field Training Program for additional training and evaluation or may be sent back to road patrol.

### **Standardized Training**

To maintain a certain level of uniformity, a concentrated effort must be made to standardize certain aspects of training. This will enable a FTO to pick up a trainee at six or ten weeks and assume that a certain amount of training has already taken place. Also, training must be uniform if evaluation is to be valid. Below are the guidelines for the structured training of the program.

*First week - Orientation Week:* The trainee is assigned to a Field Training Supervisor for orientation to the Investigations Division. During this orientation, the trainee observes FTO's perform the duties of an investigator, become familiar with the Field Training Program and orient themselves to the individual sections of the division. By the end of the week, the trainee should be accustomed to the basic functions of a detective.

*Second week:* The trainee is instructed how to complete the forms used in filing cases. Special emphasis is placed on the trainee's ability to read and comprehend the Indiana Criminal Code. FTO's also demonstrate how they interview victims and witnesses. At the end of this week, the trainee should be able to conduct simple interviews and make contacts with victims and witnesses. He should also be able to identify the elements of a specific crime under investigation and determine the need for additional investigation.

*Third week:* Emphasis is placed on investigative policy and procedure, officer safety, rules and regulations and duty assignments.

*Fourth week:* By the end of this period, the trainee should be familiar with the duties and workings of the Investigations Division and should be able to receive case assignments, make initial contacts, conduct interviews, observe proper legal departmental procedures, prepare reports, process evidence and be able to prepare probable cause statements. Some assistance may be required.

*Fifth week (target week for rotation to specialized section):* By the fifth week the trainee should have a good working knowledge of his duties and responsibilities as a detective. By this time, the trainee should be working on active case investigations and exhibiting responsibility for the investigation of his assigned cases. The trainee should be familiar with all forms and paper work encountered in the daily investigative function. By the end of this week, the trainee should be competent in handling all reports, simple investigations and arrests, general paperwork and evidence collection. The trainee may still need assistance on complicated investigations and detailed reports.

*Sixth week:* The trainee should be working on assigned cases. He should require only minor amounts of prompting.

*Seventh week:* The trainee should be familiar with court procedures and conduct. He should be made responsible for coordinating evidence, witnesses, victims and testimony on court cases where the trainee has made the investigation involving the arrest.

*Eighth week:* The trainee should be performing as the principal officer of a two man unit. The FTO stands back and observes. Chronic problems that the trainee is experiencing should be carefully examined and corrected.

## Separation From Training

If, during any phase of the Field Training and Evaluation Program, it is concluded that a trainee should be recommended for separation from the program all evaluations and related paperwork having a bearing on the eventual decision is gathered. Each of the trainee's assigned Field Training Officers submit a written memo summarizing the trainee's performance and makes a recommendation for retention or separation. These recommendations are submitted to the commander of the program. A decision to separate a trainee from the program is made only after the Director of Training and the Program Commander reviews all the trainee's files. If the director and commander decide the trainee is to be separated from the program, their recommendation is forwarded to the Investigations Chief who reviews it. If the Investigations Chief concurs, he sends the recommendation to the Sheriff who makes the final decision. If a trainee is separated from the program, he is not eligible for reentry for two years.

*Editors' Note: Many agencies have asked for information regarding field training programs for supervisors or detectives. Of the programs we have seen, this is one of the most comprehensive. Unlike many other programs, this program includes evaluation. If the trainee fails the program he is placed back in road patrol. This is possible in the Marion County Sheriff's Department because the position of detective is held by deputies. Deputies move laterally into the detective division; they are not promoted. Agencies that do promote into the detective rank often do not incorporate evaluation into their programs. The reason is that it is difficult to demote a newly promoted detective who fails the program. We feel a program that includes evaluation is more effective.*

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