

INTRODUCTION

Purpose: Assess Tennessee law enforcement officer opinions of the Peace Officer Standards and Training (TN POST) statewide curriculum.

- At the request of TN POST, MTSU's Criminal Justice Administration (CJA) partnered with the Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness (COHRE) to create updated performance objectives for the basic training academy.
- Previous job task analyses (JTAs) were collected from 11 states to identify general law enforcement tasks, task categories, and training requirements.
- CJA and COHRE discovered that many states do not report the type of training officers need to support success on the job. Instead, JTAs focused on what topics and tasks should be required of an entry-level officer.
- TN POST, CJA, and COHRE sought to provide every law enforcement officer a chance to contribute to an updated basic training curriculum.



Scan for more information.

How Cops Learn!

Best Training Practices

Ryah N. Al-Amin, Ben Stickle, Ph.D.

58% of Tennessee law enforcement officers feel basic training did not prepare them for the job.

10% of Tennessee law enforcement officers want more realistic training while at basic.

38% of comments mentioned wanting more training in general

When asked about training methods:

- 57% of comments mentioned **less lectures**
- 18% of comments mentioned **more hands-on training**
- 43% of comments mentioned **more scenario-based training**
- 15% of comments mentioned **more mock trails**

MATERIALS & PROCEDURES

VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUPS

Participants

- Active Tennessee law enforcement officers with 1-5 years of on-the-job experience and POST-certification were recruited via email.

Approximately 233 officers participated in virtual focus groups.

- 58% of participants were from police departments.
- 29% of participants were from sheriff offices.
- 13% of participants were from specialized agencies.

Measures

- Participants were asked what an entry-level officer needed to learn from TN POST before the first day on the job and which training topics needed to be adjusted.
- 19 topics were used as the focus of discussion including patrol enforcement, firearms & deadly force, investigations, and legal issues.

SURVEY

Participants

Preliminary analysis included 421 active officers across Tennessee.

- 52% of participants were entry-level officers.
- 48% of participants were supervisors.

Measures

Approximately 400 task items were rated based frequency and criticality.

Participants were asked if they felt basic training prepared them for the job based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *very little* to 5 = *very well*).