

THE COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER MANAGEMENT GUIDE

(A Model Communications Training Officer Program)

1997



THE COMMISSION
ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training

**THE COMMUNICATIONS
TRAINING OFFICER
MANAGEMENT GUIDE**

(A Model Communications Training Officer Program)

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Published 1997

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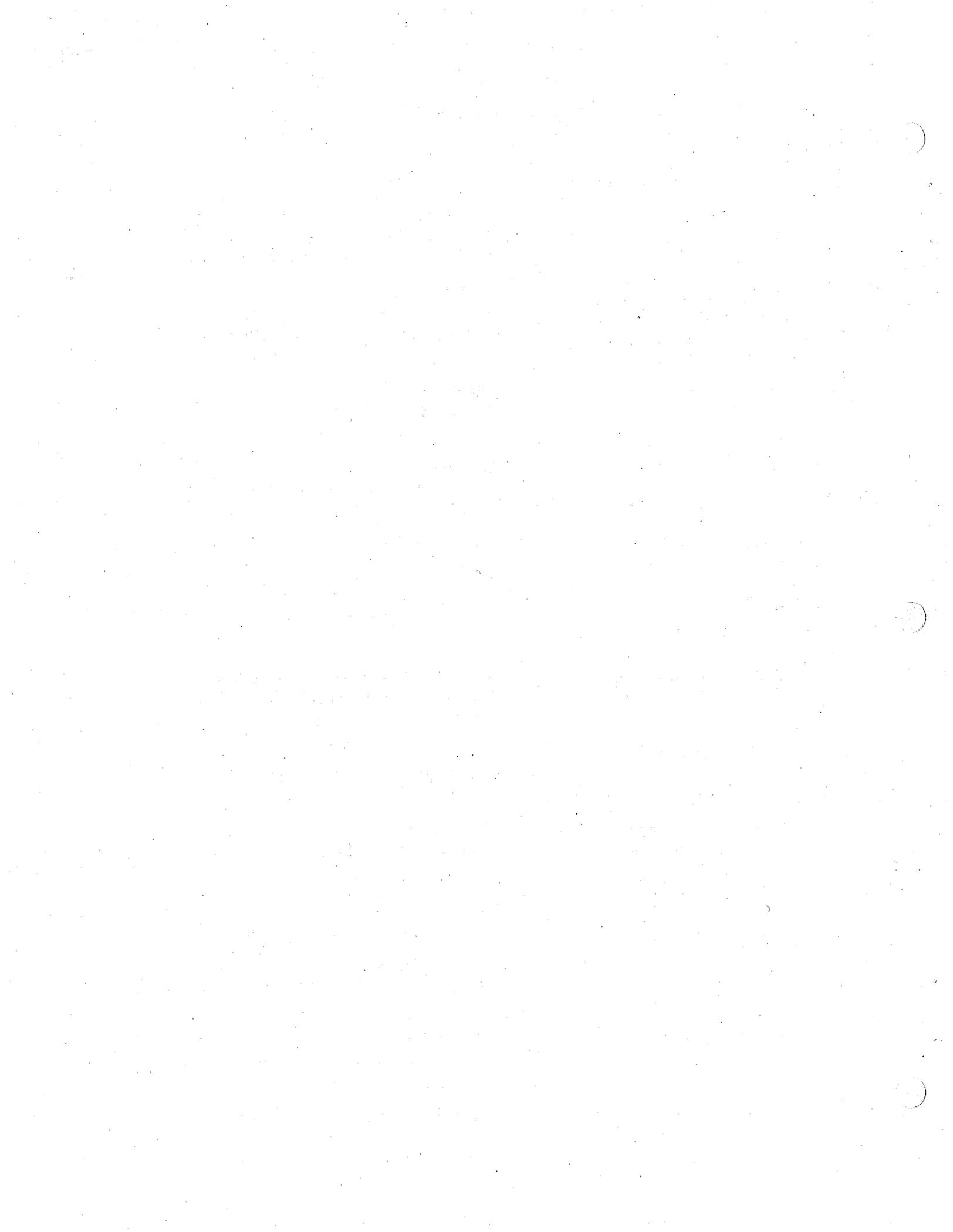
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FOREWORD

The Communications Training Officer Program is intended to facilitate an individual's transition into the public safety communications environment. The Communications Training Officer Program introduces the trainee to the personnel, procedures, policies, and purposes of a public safety agency. It provides the structure for training which is specific to the agency and the duties of the dispatcher. The one-on-one instruction style and the need for the trainer to guide the training in real-life dispatching situations, sets it apart from the academic portion of the dispatcher training program.

Dispatcher training is designed to imprint attitudes, values, and ethics in carrying out the duties of public safety dispatching. The Communications Training Manager must be certain that the program which introduces dispatchers to the agency not only develops the necessary technical skills, but also reflects the public safety philosophy of the agency and the community it serves.

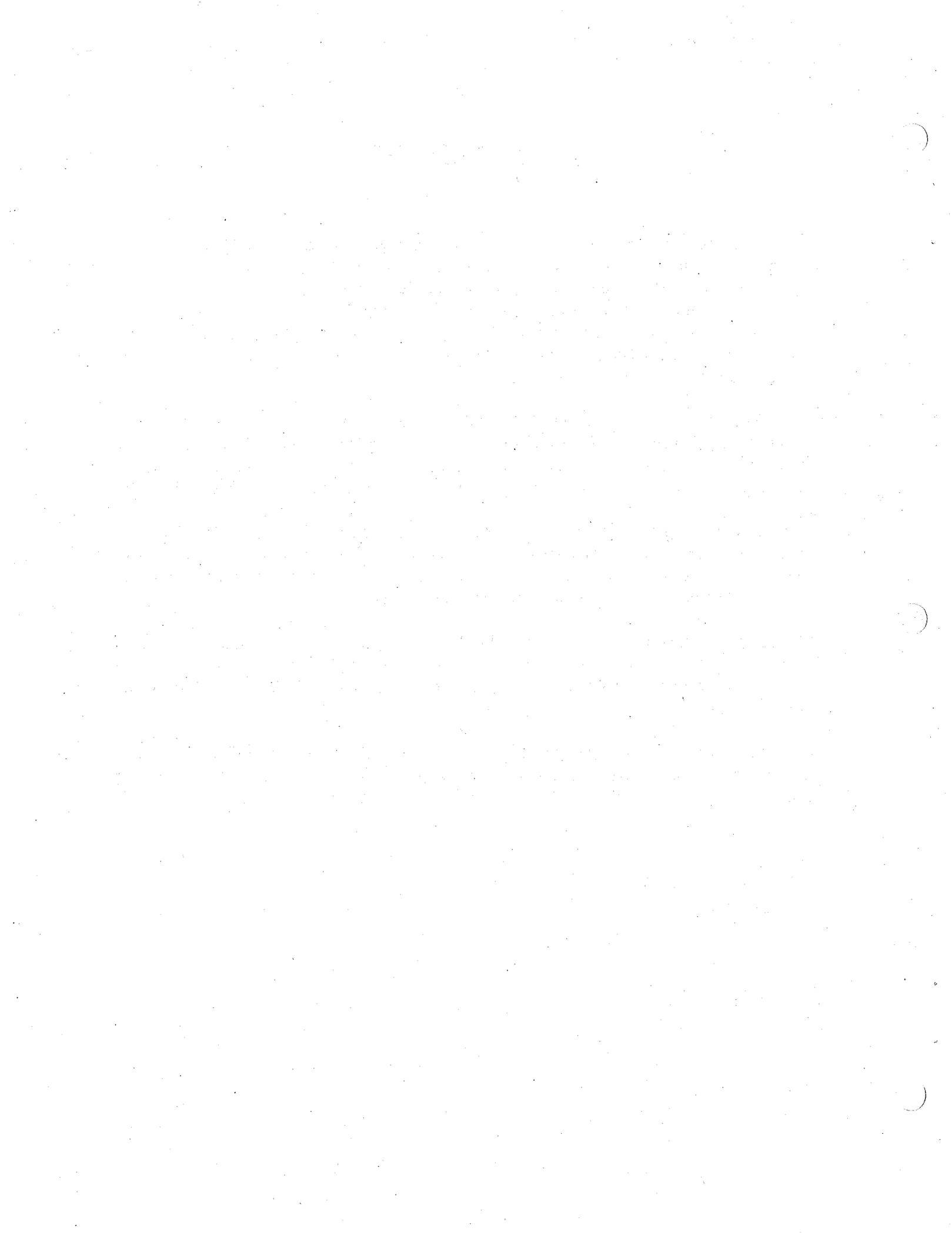
This guide is a management overview of the POST Communications Training Officer Program. It offers the Program Manager information on developing and administering a comprehensive program that meets the needs of the agency. It provides an overview of organizational structure, personnel selection, program presentation, and evaluation procedures.

The goal of this program is to provide a model upon which agencies throughout the State can base their individual Communications Training Officer Programs. Each agency can adapt and then build upon this model and apply the training provided in the POST Public Safety Dispatch Basic Course to actual dispatch functions and performance.

The Commission appreciates the contributions made by the Communications Training Officer Advisory Committee in providing input to prepare this guide. Questions or comments concerning this document should be directed to Training Delivery and Compliance Bureau (916) 227-4862.



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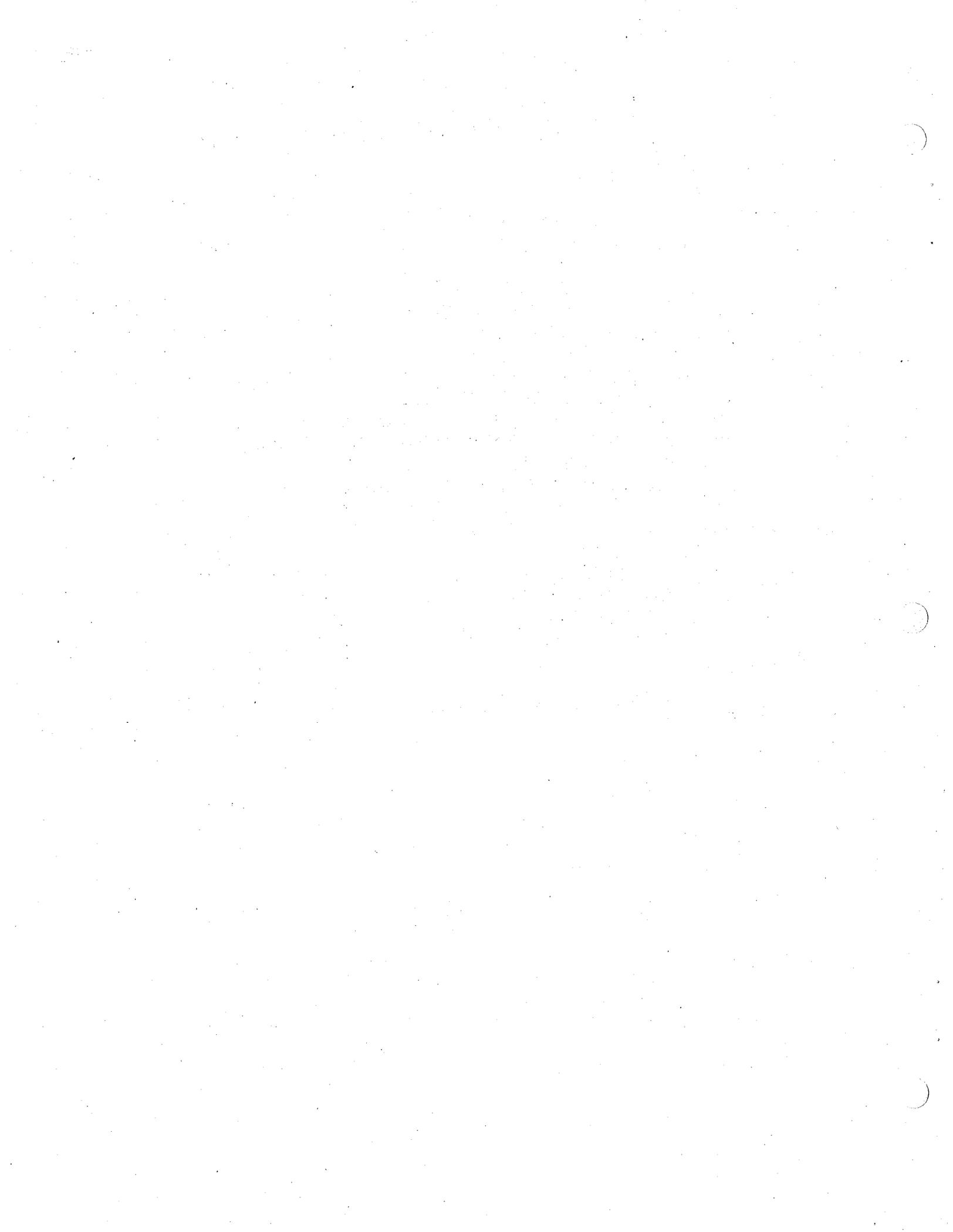
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COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

I. SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

The Communications Training Officer (CTO) Program is designed to be used in conjunction with the POST Public Safety Dispatcher's Basic Course to train new dispatchers. In addition, this program can be used for training "lateral" dispatchers who have previous work experience in other agencies.

This program is designed to protect individuals as well as the organization from liability through consistent training, objective evaluation, and thorough documentation. It also provides for the selection and training of qualified CTOs. Accountability is stressed throughout the program by an active team approach involving CTOs, supervisors, and management.

The POST CTO Program has four related components. They should be used in conjunction with, and in support of, one another. They are:

1. *CTO Course* - This train-the-trainer course was designed specifically for the public safety communications environment. It provides instruction in the roles and duties of a CTO, the adult learning process, communications skills, legal issues, and evaluation and documentation.
2. *CTO Training Guide* - The Training Guide has been developed to assist the CTO in preparing the trainee to adequately and safely serve both the agency and the public. It will provide the CTO with reference material to prepare for and use during on-the-job training. The Guide may be used to supplement an existing program or as a model for development of an agency specific training guide. It is designed to be flexible and should be customized as required for agency needs.
3. *CTO Critical Task Book* - The Critical Task Book is designed to assist the trainer in providing thorough and consistent training. It provides the CTO with a tool for documenting training provided. It is designed to be flexible and should be customized as required for agency needs.
4. *CTO Management Guide* - The Management Guide provides the CTO Program Manager with the framework for establishing policies, procedures and guidelines for administering the POST CTO Program.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Program Manager: This person has the responsibility for the overall administration and presentation of the program. The Program Manager can occupy almost any position in the organization, from experienced dispatcher to upper level management.

Supervisor: This is the first level of supervision between the Program Manager and CTO. Depending on the organization's structure, this may be a shift supervisor, lead dispatcher or field supervisor who has functional supervision over the CTO and trainee.

CTO: This is the experienced dispatcher who has been selected and trained to directly supervise and instruct the trainee.

Trainee: A new dispatcher.

III. PROGRAM PRESENTATION

LENGTH OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM - The POST Communications Training Guide is segmented to provide flexibility in the time required to present its objectives. The length of an organization's training program will vary greatly depending on such factors as the size of the organization, the complexity of the communications systems, and the scope of the dispatcher's duties. The training period may last up to one year or for the duration of the probationary period. Trainees that have experience will generally complete the program in less time than those who do not. Nevertheless, the CTO Program Manager should establish a minimum time period in the program before he or she considers a recommendation to release the trainee from the program.

ORIENTATION - It is recommended that organizations establish an initial orientation under the direction of the CTO Program Manager. The purpose of this orientation is to facilitate the trainee's entry into the organization. It should provide an overview of the agency and the training program. Agency expectations should be clearly defined for the trainee.

EVALUATION FREQUENCY - Evaluation of the trainee's performance is an on-going process. The CTO should provide the trainee with verbal feedback on a daily basis. The frequency of written evaluations will vary by agency, but is generally done daily or weekly. This may be influenced by how the agency presents the Communications Training Officer Program, or by watch or shift rotation schedules. Daily training notes, training progress evaluations and reports may serve as the basis for the written evaluation. The evaluation must be relative to the training that has been received. The trainee should be evaluated only on the segment of training that has been completed.

ROTATING TRAINERS/TRAINEES - It is recommended that trainees periodically rotate among shifts and CTOs. This will expose the trainee to a variety of shift activity,

personnel and CTO training styles. Trainees having difficulty in the program may improve their performance after such a change. The program manager may consider matching trainee performance deficiencies with CTO expertise.

TRAINEE TRACKING - Training assignments and movement through the program should be documented as part of the trainee's permanent training record. This should include; where the trainee is in the program, the trainee's present shift and CTO assignment, and where the trainee will be assigned during the next segment of the program.

CTO TEAM MEETINGS - Periodically, a CTO meeting should be scheduled to discuss trainee progress. CTOs and appropriate CTO Program supervisory and management personnel should attend. The purpose of these meetings is to review the progress of each trainee and exchange information regarding training problems and remediation efforts. This is an excellent opportunity for the program manager to identify problems and ensure program consistency.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS - Trainees should be under the direct supervision of a trained CTO throughout the program. Training can be significantly enhanced by an experience not included in the training guide. If an agency has the resources, assignments can be made for brief periods to allow the trainee to observe related public safety activities, e.g., a ride along with patrol personnel.

IV. **PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Written administrative guidelines, establishing CTO Program policy and procedure, should be set forth by the agency and include the following:

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - This section should address the chain of command and establish program related supervisory responsibilities. The specific program responsibilities of each level in the chain of command should be identified.

Program Manager: The CTO Program Manager has primary responsibility for the management of the CTO Program and associated personnel. Specifically, the manager directs all of the activities of the CTO Program directly or through subordinate personnel. Responsibilities include maintaining the employee training records, selection of all CTO Program personnel, recommending update training, review of trainee evaluations, periodic review and evaluation of the program and curriculum, and implementing changes as necessary. The CTO Program Manager is responsible for keeping management informed of program and personnel status and any potential problems that may arise. The CTO Program Manager reviews all subordinate recommendations for discipline, termination, and certification of all trainees. In some agencies the program manager conducts release from service interviews of all probationary employees.

Supervisor: The supervisor is responsible for first line supervision of day-to-day operations. In addition, the supervisor, generally under the direction of the program manager, has responsibility for monitoring trainee progress and CTO performance, and ensuring compliance with program guidelines. The supervisor provides input on the training program, selection of CTO personnel and training assignments. This individual maintains open dialog with CTOs and trainees regarding problems, remediation, and personnel and program strengths or weaknesses. The supervisor reviews documentation and prepares evaluations, making recommendations for discipline, remediation, and certification.

Communications Training Officer: This area of responsibility should include the duty of the CTO to present the agency's program by instructing the trainees that are assigned to them and evaluating the trainee's performance in accordance with agency standards. The CTO also has an obligation to attend update training and periodic CTO meetings.

SELECTION OF CTOs - CTO candidate qualifications and the selection process should be outlined in this section. Procedures for the evaluation, selection and approval of CTOs should be included. The process for releasing CTOs who no longer wish to participate in the program, who are reassigned, or who have demonstrated unacceptable performance as a trainer should be explained.

ASSIGNMENT OF TRAINEES TO TRAINING - This section provides program specifics related to determining CTO/trainee assignments and rotation, and the procedures for releasing a trainee from the program early if he or she is performing exceptionally well. This section should also include the procedure for extending training for a trainee whose performance is deficient and guidelines for recommending termination. The directive should also contain procedures to mark successful completion of and release from the program.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - This area of the directive should specify the agency's policy regarding performance evaluation of trainees. Details should include the frequency of evaluation, the use of daily training notes, and training conferences held by the program manager and/or supervisor with the CTO and trainee.

A model General Directive is provided in Appendix A which may serve as a guide for managers who wish to revise a current directive or implement a new program.

V. CTO TRAINING GUIDE

The Communications Training Officer Guide is a reference guide for the trainer. The POST Guide is designed to supplement the Communications Training Officer Course. It is provided by POST to be used in conjunction with an agency guide or may be rewritten to provide for the needs of the agency. The guide includes information on:

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - This reinforces for the trainee, trainer, and program manager the importance of their role in the success of the training program. It emphasizes the need to support the trainee in meeting the standards of the agency.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS - This section teaches that adults learn differently than children and at a different rate. The trainer must have a variety of tools to use in helping a trainee to learn diverse concepts and complicated tasks. Different methods and styles that may help a trainee progress are discussed in this chapter.

EVALUATION PROCESS - The CTO is the critical factor in objective and comprehensive evaluation of the trainee. The guide provides an example of evaluation forms and performance guidelines used in evaluation. Agencies are encouraged to use these formats or adapt formats that meet the needs of the agency.

REMEDATION PROCESS - When the trainee does not meet expected goals in the time frame provided, remediation is the effort to bring the performances up to standard. The expectations are clearly defined with an action plan for improvement.

VI. **CTO CRITICAL TASK BOOK**

The POST CTO Critical Task Book is designed to be used by the CTO and the trainee as a basis for instruction and study during the Communications Training Officer Program. The CTO Critical Task Book contains lists of tasks that begin by introducing the newly assigned dispatcher to the agency and duties, and progresses toward the trainee performing independently of the training officer. The CTO Critical Task Book contains no policies, procedures, or specific methods to follow; it simply directs training to respond to needs or situations that could be encountered by any dispatcher. Included in the CTO Critical Task Book is a copy of the Standard Performance Guidelines from the CTO Training Guide. These are included to inform the trainee of the standards he or she shall be rated against during evaluation.

The CTO Critical Task Book is as comprehensive and complete as possible for statewide application. Therefore, every agency is encouraged to examine the tasks and knowledge requirements relative to existing agency needs and amend the task book as necessary.

The CTO Critical Task Book can be used in training newly assigned dispatchers, as well as for dispatchers who have been employed through lateral entry. The following information provides guidelines for use of the CTO Critical Task Book:

SECURITY - The task book is part of performance documentation and is to be safeguarded from loss or alteration; the material should be securely maintained by the CTO. Trainees should have access to the information contained in the book under supervision of the CTO.

FORMAT - The CTO Critical Task Book contains listings of critical tasks in a format that allows the clear tracking of training and performance. Some points are knowledge based while others are performance based. The structure of this book builds from basic

to more complex performance requirements and the training should be conducted as much as possible in the same order as listed.

PRESENTATION METHOD - As training progresses through the CTO Critical Task Book, the CTO should explain and demonstrate each task while the trainee observes. Upon completion of each segment, the trainee should satisfactorily perform each required task. The CTO will initial the column in which the instruction, demonstration, and trainee performance is completed. On performance-based tasks, the trainer must make a determination of competency based on agency standards and CTO expertise. If a trainee has not had the opportunity to perform a task, or has not performed the task competently, when the segment is completed, the task must be carried over until satisfactory performance is achieved.

Because of the very nature of dispatching, not every task in the CTO Critical Task Book will occur within the time frame of the program. The CTO should request assignments that will assist in meeting the training objective. It may be necessary for the CTO to set up a simulation exercise or rely on the trainee's verbal explanation of handling the situation coupled with his or her performance in similar incidents.

Successful completion of the POST Communications Training Officer Program is based on acceptable performance or demonstrated knowledge in each critical task, as determined by agency standards. A CTO Critical Task Book will be assigned for each trainee and maintained by each CTO until the program is complete. It is then retained as part of the permanent training record.

VII. SELECTION OF A COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER

The selection of a Communications Training Officer should be approached with the same care exercised in the selection of a supervisor. In many cases, the CTO will function as a first level supervisor when actually engaged in training a newly hired or assigned dispatcher. Therefore, it is suggested the following criteria be considered to objectively assess an individual dispatcher's qualifications to be a CTO:

PERSONAL INTEREST - Desire and interest to train by the individual is of primary importance. Willingness to commit to the needs and mandates of the training program is essential to the success of the trainee and the program.

SUPERVISOR/MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION - One of the first steps is to solicit input from the interested dispatcher's supervisors and managers concerning the dispatcher's qualifications to be a CTO. One method is to ask interested dispatchers to obtain recommendations from their supervisor or manager. Another method is to ask supervisors to recommend interested and qualified dispatchers.

TENURE - Each agency should set its own required tenure for selection based on experience and needs. A suggested minimum requirement is the candidate be a permanent dispatcher who possesses a POST Public Safety Dispatcher Basic Certificate.

DISPATCH EXPERIENCE - Primary consideration should be given to candidates who possess expertise in all areas of public safety dispatching. Additional expertise, in such areas as computer, telephone, and radio technology are of value, but should be kept in perspective. The length of time a Communications Training Officer candidate has served in all areas of dispatch as a "solo" dispatcher, as well as how recent the experience, should be considered.

ATTENDANCE - A CTO should be on the job every working day. Absence of the CTO seriously jeopardizes the continuity, quality, and credibility of the program. A candidate's attendance record should be taken into consideration.

PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS - All personnel complaints against the CTO candidate should be evaluated, even if they have not resulted in a finding that the candidate was at fault or involved in misconduct. Dispatchers who perform their duties will undoubtedly displease some of the people with whom they have contact. However, consideration should be given to a candidate who maintains a high level of performance without a pattern of sustained complaints.

WRITING SKILLS - The ability of a candidate to write clearly and effectively should be assessed. This can be done by making a random review of the candidate's past written work.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS - Performance evaluations of CTO candidates should consistently reflect satisfactory performance in all areas. Assignment of an individual as a Communications Training Officer should not be done to motivate a marginal performer.

SELECTION INTERVIEW - This process can be used for those candidates who have met minimum criteria for CTO. The interview panel should be composed of supervisors and/or managers. The purpose of the interview is to allow candidates to discuss their qualifications and express their views concerning the importance of being involved in the training of new dispatchers.

The use of formal selection criteria and an interview process is not necessarily going to meet the needs of every agency. The managers of some agencies, for example, will know the relative strengths of each candidate. Therefore, even though the manager may consider each of the criteria informally, the end result will be the same. Managers of other agencies may tend to evaluate candidates more formally due to the anonymity that exists in some organizations.

After a recommended list of candidates has been established, formal acceptance of the list should be made by the program manager. Individuals selected as Communications Training Officers should be scheduled to attend the POST Communications Training Officer Course.

VIII. ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER

Communications Training Officers assume significant additional responsibilities over and above their public safety duties when assigned to train a newly assigned dispatcher. In addition to performing in an exemplary manner, while the trainee closely watches, the CTO must slow his or her pace to review the purpose and detail of every new situation. The CTO must use the CTO Critical Task Book to guide the trainee through a comprehensive curriculum that requires the blending of knowledge, skills, and good judgment. The role of the CTO is partially defined in five functions as follows:

Role Model: Exemplifies excellence in carrying out the duties of a public safety dispatcher.

Trainer: Assesses the training needs of the new dispatcher and is able to apply the techniques of teaching to best meet those needs.

Evaluator: Determines level of performance compared to agency standards.

Supervisor: Directs, monitors, and coordinates training activities with dispatching assignments encountered daily.

Counselor: Develops rapport and facilitates entry into the organization.

The essentials of the CTO role are he or she apply the techniques of coaching by providing a model to follow and giving encouragement and direction to the trainee to apply what has been taught. This is followed by giving feedback on the trainee's performance. It is important this assessment have a positive impact on the performance of the trainee. The CTO's evaluation of the trainee's performance should always be followed by encouragement to continue good performance or an adjustment of training strategy to overcome performance deficiencies.

The system that effectively identifies and selects qualified personnel to be Communications Training Officers will more often produce technically competent and able dispatchers. When Communications Training Officers who subscribe to the highest standards of the organization are selected, high standards will be set for the trainees as well. In discussing the role of the Communications Training Officer, it must be pointed out that while high standards are desirable, the trainee must measure up to standards that the agency sets through the Communications Training Officer Program, not a higher standard set by the CTO .

IX. ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

The role of supervisors who have CTOs and trainees under their supervision is to ensure compliance with the standards and objectives of the agency's Communications Training Officer Program. To meet this requirement, the supervisor must monitor the training activities of the CTO and seek periodic feedback from the CTO on the trainee's progress. The following activities should be included in the supervisor's tasks when trainees are assigned:

OBSERVATION - While it is not desirable to constantly monitor incidents handled by the CTO and trainee, supervisors will in the course of their duties, observe trainee performance. In addition, the interaction between the trainer and trainee should be observed.

FEEDBACK - Direct feedback from a supervisor to a trainee has very significant impact and should be done carefully and with forethought. To openly praise a trainee, or both the trainee and the CTO, for an incident of good performance will serve to positively reinforce the program. Negative comments on the trainee's performance should be made privately through the CTO.

PERIODIC MEETINGS - Meetings should be held by the supervisor with the CTO and trainee to discuss training progress and review daily notes along with the CTO Critical Task Book. This will provide an opportunity for the supervisor to solicit input from both of the participants and support the CTO by suggesting training alternatives when appropriate. Meetings may be held as frequently as necessary, depending on scheduling and the needs of the trainee.

EVALUATION REVIEW - The training evaluation must be examined for objectivity and to ensure documentation is consistent with observed performance. Ratings are to be supported by text and reflect agency standards. Training deficiencies should be substantiated with specific documentation using standard performance guidelines and be accompanied by an action plan for improvement. Predictions about the trainee's ultimate success or failure in the program should not be made by the CTO in an evaluation. A conclusion that the trainee will not benefit from further participation in the program or a recommendation to terminate the trainee's employment should be made by the supervisor or higher authority in separate correspondence.

Just as a supervisor will assess dispatchers in their regular duties, the supervisor must guide the CTO through the training process. A personality conflict between the CTO and trainee must be identified and addressed immediately. The CTO must maintain an objective and professional relationship with the trainee at all times. It has long been recognized that the supervisor is an important element in carrying out the objectives of the organization. His or her role in training is equally significant.

X. **ROLE OF THE CTO PROGRAM MANAGER**

The CTO Program Manager deals with the administrative responsibilities of selecting CTOs, assigning trainees to CTOs and shifts, tracking training progress, and evaluating the performance of CTOs and the program. Whether the Program Manager is assigned to the dispatch center or to a training unit, he or she must maintain a liaison with, and have the assistance of, the shift supervisor. Based on information received from the CTO, supervisor and the training documentation, the CTO Program Manager is responsible for the following tasks:

SELECTION OF CTOs - It is the responsibility of the program manager to oversee the selection and training of CTOs. Suggested selection criteria are discussed elsewhere in this document.

TRAINEE ASSIGNMENTS - The CTO Program Manager should have an overview of the training progress of each trainee in the program and the assignment status of each CTO. To effectively manage trainee assignments requires planning and a working knowledge of vacation schedules, special assignments or training courses the CTOs could be assigned to during a training cycle. The Program Manager should have the authority to make CTO/trainee assignments that meet the needs of the trainee. To maintain the integrity of the program, the sole authority to assign a trainee to a CTO should reside with the manager.

SHORTENED OR EXTENDED TRAINING - Based on the recommendation of the supervisor and the review of training documents, the Program Manager should have the authority to extend training for a trainee who is responding to remediation efforts. Conversely, trainees who have progressed through the program rapidly should be recommended for an early release.

TERMINATION - A recommendation for termination of a trainee who is not responding to remediation efforts should be made by the Program Manager.

CTO EVALUATION - For consistency and quality control, the Program Manager should ensure each CTO is evaluated on his or her performance on a regular basis. Direct observation by the shift supervisor or Program Manager, feedback from trainees and written documentation should be used in this evaluation. CTOs should be made aware of the agency's policy to seek trainee feedback to preclude any misunderstanding.

PROGRAM EVALUATION - It is important that the CTO Program be objectively evaluated by the Program Manager in an on-going basis to ensure the Program is effective and meeting the needs of the agency. The Program Manager has a responsibility to seek feedback from trainees, CTOs, shift supervisors, and field personnel who are participating in, or are affected by the Program. Some methods for receiving comment are formal meetings, random contacts or responses on evaluation documents.

PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHER BASIC COURSE LIAISON - The Program Manager should be aware of any modifications made to the POST Public Safety Dispatcher Basic Course and should make routine inquiries regarding changes. Some critical areas will vary from agency to agency and have impact on the consistency of the CTO Program. Agencies are encouraged to develop a system where CTOs and supervisors can monitor academy training techniques. This is intended to ensure continuity and relevance between the Dispatcher Basic Course and the CTO Program.

EVALUATION

The evaluation process serves to measure performance and progress through the Training Program. The evaluation must be consistent, objective, and administered in a manner that promotes good performance and continued progress. There are specific components that are included in the evaluation process with tools available to assist the Program Manager and CTO in completing comprehensive evaluations. The Program Manager must set realistic performance and conduct standards that must be clearly conveyed to the trainee. The CTO observes and measures trainee performance and provides continual feedback to the trainee. Written evaluations document the trainee's performance, specifically whether or not the trainee has met the standards. The process includes specific requirements for redirecting the trainee's efforts if the standards have not been met. Performance of tasks identified in the CTO Critical Task Book, the judgment used by the trainee in performance, and the behaviors associated with personal relations and dependability will serve as the basis for the evaluation.

The CTO's performance as a trainer should also be monitored to ensure the objectives of the program are being presented and that trainees are receiving quality instruction. While the program manager sets standards, the CTO is the actual presenter and a critical component in the training process. The CTO's performance should be measured using formal and informal feedback from shift supervisors, peers, and current or past trainees.

Program evaluation must take place continuously. Success is measured by the performance quality of newly independent dispatchers. Continued failure of new employees brings up questions about whether the employee selection process is drawing qualified candidates or if the performance standards are realistic.

I. TRAINEE EVALUATION

The basic rule in any evaluation program is **CONSISTENCY**. The performance of each trainee must be evaluated against the same standards. Inconsistent evaluation leads to confusion and invites grievances and/or litigation. The program manager must establish the standards and ensure that all CTOs evaluate their trainees against those standards. There are two basic standards for evaluating trainee performance:

TRAINEE PERFORMANCE/SOLO DISPATCHER - This measures trainee performance against the agency's performance standards for all personnel, without regard to the amount of time the employee has been in training. This standard will result in the average trainee initially having generally low ratings with higher ratings earned as training progresses. Consistently low ratings indicate a trainee that is not advancing. The agency should establish consistent standards for what ratings are acceptable as training progresses.

TRAINEE PERFORMANCE/TIME IN TRAINING - This standard measures trainee performance against performance expectations linked to experience and time in training. This standard requires that the agency establish performance expectations for each rating period or cycle. Consistent or ascending ratings in this format indicate a trainee who is advancing through the program. Declining ratings indicate the trainee is not progressing.

Both of these standards have strengths when applied consistently. The Program Manager must select the method that best suits the agency and develop that standard for the CTO Program.

The Program Manager, supervisor, and CTO should convey to the trainee an honest and objective evaluation is an important part of the training program. The CTO must encourage the trainee to apply what has been explained and demonstrated. The trainee must be allowed to proceed without fear that making a mistake will affect his or her chances to successfully complete the program. Errors will occur during training and the trainee must be evaluated on the ability to recover from an error and proceed with a task.

Much of the personal style of the CTOs will be passed on to the trainee. This is to be expected because many procedures can be applied correctly in different ways. Trainees should not be penalized for adopting a certain style, perhaps that of the last CTO, as long as it follows agency policy. For example, a trainee who uses a CAD command different than the trainer would choose to place a unit out of service should not be forced to alter their style to please the trainer as long as the outcome is the same

There are many tools that may be utilized in the evaluation of trainee performance. The observation report contained in the CTO Training Guide is one example of an evaluation tool. Some tools that may be used in a successful evaluation process are:

DAILY TRAINING NOTES - This method of documentation is invaluable for providing immediate feedback to a trainee on his or her performance. Notes should be made as soon as possible after incidents occur, and must be reviewed with the trainee. These comments will be used as the basis for completing more formal evaluation documents. Each important incident and response must be documented and reviewed, even though it may occur too early in the program to be a valid subject for evaluation. This process reinforces satisfactory performance and provides direction for the trainee to improve poor performance. Steps taken to assist the trainee in improving his or her performance should also be noted here for inclusion in the evaluation.

OBSERVATION REPORTS - This is a more formal documentation that may be used in place of or to augment daily notes. The trainee performance is rated against agency standards in all areas where training has been accomplished. Specific comments to support all above or below standard ratings must be included. The CTO may also include action plans or short term goals. The trainee is usually encouraged to add responsive comments after reviewing the observation report. This allows the supervisor and manager to have immediate input from the trainee regarding the CTO and the training program.

TRAINING PROGRESS REPORTS - These progress reports will be completed at agency specified intervals, such as weekly, bi-weekly or the end of each training cycle. These progress reports are intended to document skills and tasks covered during the training period, evaluate performance, and provide appropriate training direction.

Each completed evaluation form should address the critical tasks presented during the rating period, as well as the judgment displayed in performing those tasks. Personal characteristics such as personal relations and dependability should also be documented, as they are critical to the success of any trainee. Critical tasks that are carried over from a previous evaluation period because they were not acceptably performed, or are not currently being performed at an acceptable level should also be included.

Each skill or task the trainee is required to perform must be instructed and demonstrated by the CTO, and then applied by the trainee before it can be evaluated. For example, if a trainee handles a complex incident early in the program before there has been any instruction or demonstration by the CTO, and he or she does poorly, that incident should not be used in the evaluation as an example of poor performance. In this situation, the incident should be documented in the evaluation, but the rating should not reflect poor performance in that area. The incident should be discussed thoroughly with the trainee. The feedback should point out any deficiencies the trainee displayed and direction should be given for better performance in the future.

If proficiency in the task is not shown at the conclusion of the evaluation period, then a less than acceptable rating is appropriate. If less than acceptable performance continues throughout the next evaluation period, the rating should be "unacceptable." However, a trainee should not be penalized for unsuccessful attempts or less than acceptable performance observed during the rating period if satisfactory performance is achieved by the end of the rating period.

Conversely, if a trainee performs acceptably and the CTO feels the trainee properly performed the techniques involved in the incident, then the CTO Critical Task Book may reflect the trainee has demonstrated the knowledge and the performance should be included in the evaluation. Once a task is completed in the CTO Critical Task Book and rated acceptably, any instances of future regression should be appropriately addressed in the evaluation.

Areas of observation that may be included in a progress report include:

PERFORMANCE - The trainee should be rated in all areas of skills and knowledge that will be required for the trainee to effectively perform as an independent dispatcher. Topics included in this section are writing, listening, and verbal skills. The critical skills of decision making, problem solving, and adaptability should also be rated. Under this section, the trainee may be rated on their ability to comply with practices and procedures that provide for the employee's own safety and stress management, as well as the safety of field personnel.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS - All methods of communications used by the trainee will be observed and documented. Not only must the trainee be polite and helpful to the public during routine contacts, but he or she must demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with angry, hostile, or hysterical individuals. Communications must be clear, concise, and timely. The trainee must be able to accept and respond positively to feedback from the CTO and supervisors. Their professional attitude and self confidence are also evaluated.

KNOWLEDGE - Included in this area is the trainee's knowledge of agency policy and procedures, knowledge of equipment, and the trainee's ability to use available resources. This also includes computer knowledge, call types used by the agency, and geography of the jurisdiction.

JOB READINESS - This area evaluates attendance, promptness, professional appearance, and preparation for duty. The consistent timeliness in completing study assignments or other work required during the shift are also evaluated.

These guidelines are provided to assist the Program Manager in developing tools that will assist the CTO in preparing objective evaluations. The Program Manager should monitor and assist CTOs in completing clear, consistent, and accurate ratings.

II. **CTO PERFORMANCE**

An important element of managing the training program is evaluating the performance of the CTOs. The Program Manager should have regular contact with their CTOs and make periodic direct observations of each CTO in the training environment. Observations and feedback from supervisors, other employees, and current or former trainees via meetings and/or questionnaires will provide input for evaluating the CTO.

Trainees are a valuable resource in evaluating the CTO, but may be reluctant to volunteer negative feedback regarding their training officers. This may be because they feel they are not yet knowledgeable about the job and cannot fairly assess the training or they fear alienating the CTO or other senior employees. Therefore, the Program Manager must encourage candid observations from trainees.

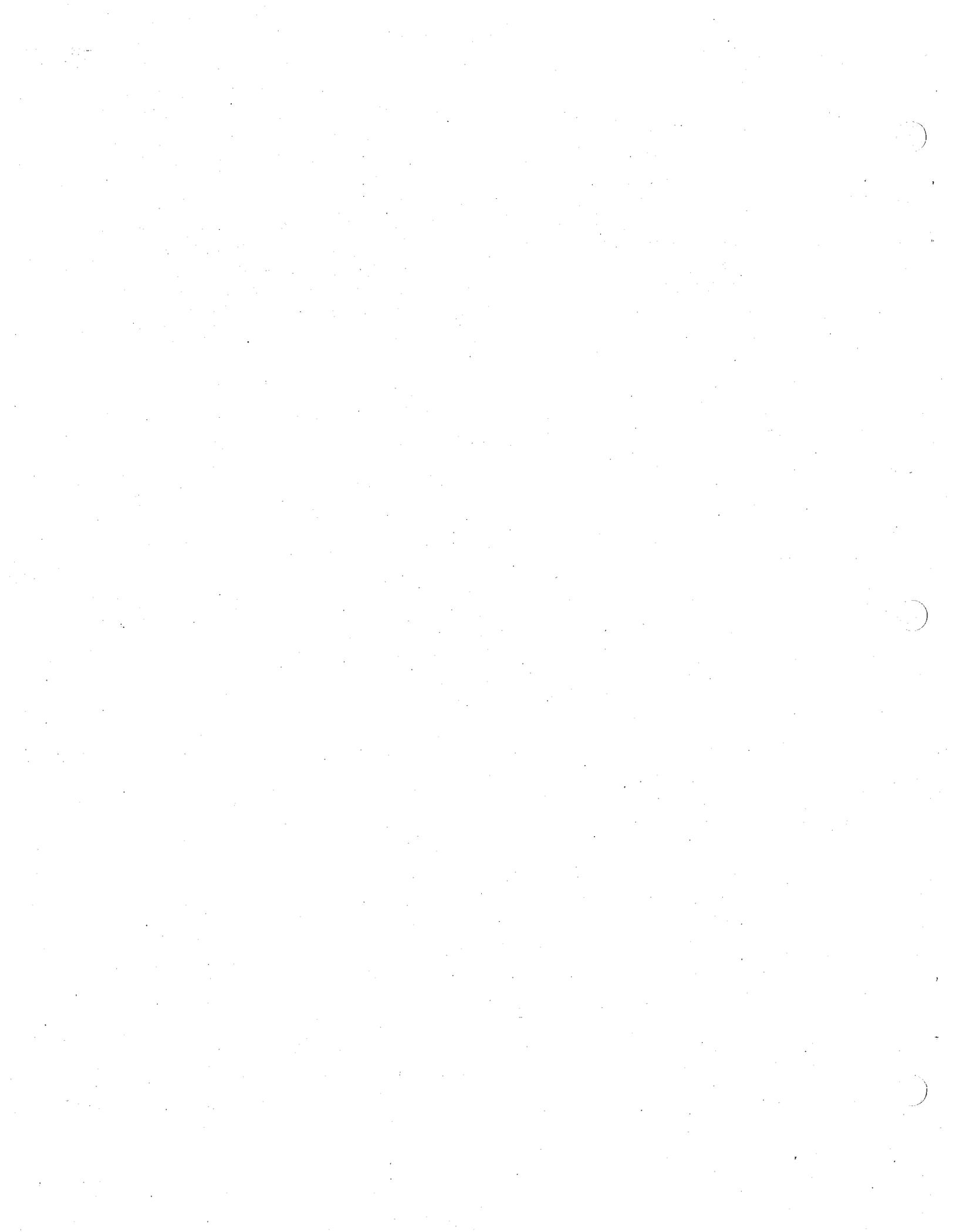
III. **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The Program Manager needs to establish a system to evaluate all aspects of the training program including content and effectiveness of the involved personnel. In evaluating the program, the manager should determine whether the needs and goals of the agency are being met. The manager must examine whether the program is utilizing resources efficiently to produce effective employees. Additionally, periodic review and update of training content and materials is vital to keep the program valid.

One of the tools for accomplishing a program evaluation is to require the program participants to complete a questionnaire relative to their role in the training program. These forms can be utilized at selected intervals in the program to provide the manager

with useful and timely feedback. A final evaluation form can be sent to trainees who have recently completed the program asking for specific feedback on the program and the CTOs. This final form may be unsigned to encourage a candid response. Managers should review all feedback forms submitted.

Another suggested tool is meeting with affected groups within the program, including supervisors, CTOs, current, and past trainees. The manager may also choose to meet individually or in a group, with in-service dispatchers not directly involved in the program. This forum is effective in bringing problems to the surface if the meetings are conducted informally and the participants are given the opportunity to speak in confidence.



APPENDIX A



COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER PROGRAM
(Example Policy or General Order)

The purpose of this order is to set forth a communications training officer program for training public safety dispatchers in the communications center, in conjunction with the POST Public Safety Dispatcher Basic Course, and to establish procedures for evaluating performance.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER PROGRAM

- A. Responsibility for training dispatchers newly assigned to Communications shall be divided between the Bureau of Operations (line responsibilities) and the Bureau of Training (staff responsibilities).
- B. The training unit shall be responsible for staff functions involving the development of the Communication Training Officer (CTO) Program, certifying communications training officers, and supervising training activities.
- C. The operations division shall be responsible for the line supervision of newly assigned dispatchers, for teaching the curriculum developed by the training unit, and for evaluating their performance. CTOs shall have primary responsibility for training and supervision of the trainees.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM MANAGER

- A. The program manager shall be responsible for the following staff functions in support of the CTO training program:
 - 1. Participation in the selection of CTOs.
 - 2. Maintaining the roster of selected CTOs.
 - 3. Preparing, updating, and distributing the Communications Training Guide and CTO Critical Task Book.
 - 4. Determining trainee assignments.
 - 5. Evaluating the performance of CTOs as trainers.

B. The program manager shall be responsible for the following staff functions concerning trainees:

1. Monitoring each trainee's performance and progress.
2. Conferring regularly with communications supervisors and assisting them in meeting the special training needs of individual trainees.
3. Participating in performance evaluation conferences and preparing reports in accordance with Part VII of this order.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SHIFT SUPERVISOR

- A. Monitors day-to-day activity of the CTO and the assigned trainees to ensure compliance with program guidelines.
- B. Provides input on the CTO Program, selection of CTO personnel and training assignments.
- C. Reviews documentation and prepares evaluations, making recommendations for discipline, remediation, and certification.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICERS (CTOs)

- A. CTOs shall instruct trainees assigned to them and review and evaluate their performance in accordance with the Communications Training Guide and directives from the program manager. The training unit issues one Critical Task Book for each trainee. The book contains the curriculum which the trainee must learn and forms on which CTOs are to document the trainee's knowledge and ability to perform the required tasks.
 1. The Critical Task Book for each trainee shall be passed from one CTO to the next as training assignments change.
 2. The last CTO to supervise a trainee shall be responsible for returning the Critical Task Book, complete with documentation, to the program manager.
- B. In accordance with Part VII of this order, each CTO shall be responsible for:
 1. Participating in regular conferences concerning the performance of trainees.
 2. Completing observation reports and bi-weekly summaries for his or her assigned trainee.
- C. CTOs shall attend update training and scheduled CTO meetings.

V. SELECTION, CERTIFICATION AND RELEASE OF CTOs

A. CTO Qualifications

1. Two years of experience in the agency, unless exempted from this requirement by the program manager.
2. Satisfactory performance.
3. Good teaching and evaluation skills.
4. Satisfactory attendance.
5. Good interpersonal skills.
6. No recent serious disciplinary action.

B. Nomination of Prospective CTOs

1. Communications division supervisors shall be responsible for nominating qualified employees to become CTOs.
2. A dispatcher who has exceptional training skills, but less than two years of experience with the agency, may be nominated.
3. Nominations shall be forwarded to the program manager.

C. Selection Panel

1. The program manager shall convene a panel to review CTO nominations and to recommend selections to the division commander.
2. The panel shall be comprised of the program manager and communications supervisors.
3. The panel may consider any information which pertains to a nominee's qualifications including, but not limited to, performance evaluations, internal affairs records, agency safety records, and recommendations from the nominee's supervisor.
4. The program manager shall forward a list of the nominations which are endorsed by a majority of the panel to the division commander with a recommendation to approve the selections. Whenever a nominee has served in the agency for less than two years, the fact shall be noted.

D. Approval and Selection of CTOs

1. The division commander shall have final approval over the selection of CTO candidates.
2. Candidates who are approved by the division commander must complete the POST Communications Training Officer Course before they can be certified as a CTO.
3. The program manager shall submit a list of candidates who have successfully completed the course to the division commander for certification. The CTO status shall be documented in the dispatcher's personnel file.

E. Releasing a CTO

1. A CTO who transfers or is on leave from the communications division for more than four months may be released from the CTO Program. Upon return to the division, the dispatcher may be required to pass the nomination, selection, and approval process again if he or she wishes to be re-certified. Release letters shall be forwarded to the dispatcher's personnel file.
2. A CTO who does not perform his or her responsibilities in a satisfactory manner and maintain the minimum CTO selection qualifications may be released from the CTO Program. Release letters approved by the division commander shall be placed in the dispatcher's personnel file.

VI. ASSIGNMENT OF DISPATCHER TRAINEES TO COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING

- A. Upon completing the POST Public Safety Dispatcher Basic Course, or lateral entry into the agency, trainees shall be assigned to the communications division to complete the Communications Training Program.
- B. The program manager shall determine trainee/CTO assignments.
 1. A trainee shall be assigned to different CTOs at predetermined intervals not to exceed eight weeks.
 2. Communications supervisors shall not separate a trainee from the assigned CTO except in special circumstances. Such circumstances will be documented in observation reports.
 3. The communications supervisor shall document in the Observation Report instances when a trainee is assigned to work with someone other than his/her specified CTO.

C. The standard assignment to the Communications Training Program shall be 15 weeks. Every trainee shall be under the immediate supervision of the assigned CTO at all times during training.

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|----|--------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Orientation/Classroom Training | 1 Week |
| 2. | Complaint Taking | 6 Weeks |
| 3. | Radio Dispatching | 6 Weeks |
| 4. | Observation and Evaluation | 2 Weeks |

D. At the recommendation of the shift supervisor and the CTO, the program manager may release a trainee from the CTO Program early if the trainee demonstrates proficiency at an accelerated rate. Training may be extended for a trainee who is not performing to standards and additional training is expected to make the trainee successful.

VII. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A. Performance Review Conferences

1. Bi-Weekly Conferences

The CTO shall meet with the shift supervisor once every two weeks. They will review the trainee's progress to determine if there are any performance deficiencies requiring consultation with the program manager.

2. Transition Conferences

All involved CTOs and shift supervisors and/or the program manager shall meet when a trainee is assigned to a new CTO. The agenda should include a performance review and training strategy.

B. Written Evaluations

1. Observation Report

- a. Each day the CTO shall prepare an Observations Report and rate the trainee's performance in the designated categories against agency standards. Ratings shall be supported by text detailing areas covered, accomplishments of the trainee, and areas for improvement.

- b. The CTO shall review the Observation Report with the trainee. The trainee shall be encouraged to respond with additional comments.

2. Bi-Weekly Assessment Report

- a. At the end of every two weeks, the CTO shall prepare a report detailing the progress of the trainee during the rating period. This should include an assessment of the trainee's performance measured against the agency's standards and an action plan to address any substandard performance.
- b. This document will include any recommendation to shorten or extend the training period.
- c. The CTO shall review the summary with the shift supervisor and the trainee. The trainee is encouraged to respond with additional comments.

C. Recommendation to Terminate Employment

In the event the performance of a trainee is unsatisfactory and the prospect for correcting the deficiencies is poor, the program manager shall recommend to the agency head that the trainee's employment be terminated. The recommendation shall be made by inter-office memo, accompanied by supporting documentation, and forwarded through the communications division chain of command.

D. Successful Completion of Communications Training

At the end of the CTO Training period, the program manager shall be responsible for submitting an inter-office memo to the division commander concerning each trainee who successfully completes the program. Upon approval by the division commander, the trainee shall be assigned to regular duty in the Communications Center.

By order of:

Agency Head

Date