

Academy COVID-19 Guidelines

Many academies are facing challenges with the COVID-19 prevention directives that are changing daily. The Training and Standards Bureau held an emergency meeting with the Law Enforcement Standards Board on Thursday, March 19th to approve the following options and guidelines to help academies continue to deliver preparatory training during this unprecedented time. These recommendations will only remain in place as long as COVID-19 prevention directives limit students' time in a classroom setting. Once those restrictions are lifted, academies will resume a normal academy schedule.

The Training and Standards Bureau is not going to provide detailed instructions on how each individual subject should be taught. Instead, we are providing guidelines, approved by the Law Enforcement Standards Board that will govern how academies can conduct the training. It is up to each academy and the instructors to develop online training or alternate training within the guidelines listed below. If there are any questions, suggestions, or issues with the guidance below, academy directors should contact the Training and Standards Bureau to discuss them.

Acceptable alternatives for the lecture portion of classes:

- Host simultaneous class lectures online (in a virtual classroom). What this means is that the instructor would provide a lecture using a camera and/or webcast-type presentation with the students. This would not be a recorded lecture; it would literally be the instructor doing a live lecture with the ability to show the power point/videos to the students at the same time. All students would attend this lecture as though they were in a classroom (all there at the same time as the instructor).

The students must have a way to participate in the class/webcast. This means they could be on the phone at the same time as the lecture so they can ask questions, or the webcast must have an area for the students to type in questions or comment on what the instructor is saying, etc. Instructors could also build in polling questions and/or quizzes if the technology has that capability (to check learning along the way).

Instructors could also require students to participate using a chat function during or after the lecture to respond to questions or comments (for example, students would have to answer a question and then respond to two other student's answers to the question in order to be counted as "participating" in the class).

- For some academies, teaching simultaneous lectures online is not possible. If an academy uses a learning management system such as Canvas/Webex that does not provide a live camera set up at their campus or elsewhere, they may use a different *instructor-led* online learning management system. However, it must be able to provide interactive options for students and have the ability to record or post video lectures, screen shots of power points, etc. The system must also have the capability for student interaction such as being able to post questions as they view the information, participate in discussions, along with other interactive options.

Instructors should work with professional development staff at their academies to help the instructors make their online learning collaborative and interactive. If using online learning through a technical college, academy instructors must meet the standards for any online

learning provided by the technical college. The use of chat functions, google docs, and other methods to interact and check learning are encouraged.

- The platform/learning management system the academy uses (Blackboard, Zoom, etc.) is up to the academy, but it needs to be able to accommodate the technological guidelines as mentioned above.
- Instructors must figure out the best way to conduct learning activities throughout the lecture. If there is an activity listed in the instructor manual, they should conduct some sort of activity, assignment, project, etc. that meets the same goal of the activity listed in the instructor manual. Presenting a class in a virtual realm does not mean presenting a lecture with a power point only. Engaging students online is extremely important to ensure the students are learning the materials.
- For any PATs that do not require hands-on activity (for example, if there's a narrative report that needs to be completed in writing, etc.), the students may complete any written-type PAT assignment or activities and submit them to the instructor via email so the instructor can assess each student's performance/work.
- For any PATs that require hands-on activity or performance (for example, in DAAT, Traffic Crash (processing a mock crash scene), Physical Evidence Collection (process a mock crime scene)), those activities will have to be postponed until students can come back to a physical classroom. The other option is that academies can still do the activities within the guidelines set by the school (for example, have 10 or less students conduct the skills together at a time). Doing these PATs and even practicing the physical skills such as DAAT, Firearms, etc. in person is not negotiable – these skills are required to complete the academy - but can be delayed until students can come back to class.
- For the Physical Fitness classes – the students will be instructed to do the two 1-hour physical fitness sessions (at a minimum) per week on their own. Physical fitness instructors should consider providing a daily workout plan for students (one-page document with a workout written out) or students can do their own workout at least twice a week at home. Providing a workout is especially important if the physical fitness instructor is working with recruits on an area they need improvement on (such as pushups, sit-ups, running, etc.) We want to ensure students are still receiving support and direction on how to improve their fitness.

Students should then send the physical fitness instructor - or whoever the academy designates - a weekly email explaining what they did for their two physical fitness sessions that week. We want to ensure there is accountability and that the students are continuing their workouts on their own. The national health guidance at this point does not prevent individuals from working out at home or outside. With the weather improving there should be more opportunities to get outside to go for a run or work out.

The exit PRT must still be completed in Phase Three. When the students are allowed to return to class and academies have the students complete the physical skills they missed, the final scenario week, etc., academies can run the exit PRT at that time. Therefore, it is important for recruits to continue doing their physical fitness sessions on their own at home.

- Academies MUST document how they run the classes – show how they will cover the material, document how any PATs are done, etc. Instructors must show these adjustments in their lesson plans. Field representatives may check these lesson plans to ensure all of the materials are being covered adequately.
- Additionally, academies should determine a way for field representatives to audit the online classes. The field representatives will ensure classes are interactive, that instructors are checking learning, and covering the material appropriately.
- If an academy cannot complete all the physical skills training in a specific phase (Phase 1 or Phase 2), and the COVID-19 prevention measures are still in place, academies may begin teaching the lecture portion of classes in the next phase. The students will have to wait to take the end-of-phase test until all materials and skills/PATs are completed in a specific phase before they take the end-of-phase test.

Once students can come back to class physically, the skills for the earlier phase should take priority so that students can take the end-of-phase test for the earlier phase before continuing with the next phase materials. For example, if an academy did not complete all the physical skills in Phase 2 and moved into the first week of lecture for Phase 3 and then students are allowed to return to class, the academy should stop teaching the rest of Phase 3, go back and finish Phase 2, take the end-of-phase 2 test, then resume where they left off in Phase 3. We do not want students to have to take two end-of-phase tests together (want to keep some space between those tests if possible).

- The Training and Standards Bureau is not recommending any changes for the final scenario week process. The students will still be required to successfully complete the final scenario week in order to graduate.
- If instructors or academies have suggestions for completing activities that deviate from the instructor manual, they should consult with the Training and Standards Bureau to see if their suggested activities are acceptable replacements.

Unacceptable alternatives:

- Telling students to read the text, look at the power point and videos, or watch a recorded lecture on their own time (non-instructor led) and counting that as online training is not acceptable. Academies must have the instructor lead-teach the class by doing the live lecture or be an instructor-led course and have interaction with the students attending all at one time or throughout the class. Instructors must ensure activities are completed and check learning along the way.
- Skipping physical skills PATs, final scenarios, etc. is prohibited. These skills must be completed by students before they can graduate. All requirements must still be met as usual outside of completing the lectures and written assignments via a webcast and assignments being turned in via email or some other electronic means.

Challenges:

- **Connectivity.** Academies need to ensure all students can connect to the virtual classroom so they can attend all lectures, etc. This will only work if all students can connect and participate in class. If a student cannot connect this option will not work for your academy.
- **Attendance.** Instructors must ensure that all students attend the virtual classroom/lecture. Not only at the beginning of the class, but instructors need to check throughout the class that the students are still paying attention and still online/attending. Instructors can accomplish this by asking poll questions, requiring feedback or answers to questions from each student, or by checking in to make sure students are still online.
- Academies and instructors need to continually double check learning in the virtual world. Our concern is that students will challenge the academy if they fail an end-of-phase test and say that they were put at a disadvantage due to the change in the learning environment. It is very important for instructors to make the learning as interactive as possible, ensure students respond to discussion questions, take quizzes, complete assignments and projects, etc. This allows the instructor to check on the learning as the class proceeds. It will mean more work for the instructor, but this will make students more successful in the end.

Additional guidelines:

- Law Enforcement and jail academies will be allowed to run at the Training School's discretion. Understanding that this is a fluid event and can change.
- If an academy has to shut down, exceptions for timeframes for completing preparatory training would be taken into consideration.
- In lieu of wet labs, the use of NHTSA SFST videos is acceptable. If utilizing the videos, academies should try to incorporate a wet lab into the integration exercises if possible.
- If an enrolled student in the academy doesn't feel comfortable returning to the academy, they could stop attending classes (if they are a recruit, they would have to have agency approval). The student could enroll in the next academy at the start of the last successful Phase that they had completed (similar to if a student would leave due to a medical issue).
- Due to illnesses or agency staffing issues, Training School may encounter a shortage of qualified Adjunct Instructors. Training and Standards said that we could increase the student to instructor ration *for some Unified Tactics. Training Schools could go to an 8/1 student to instructor ratio.*

In the end, our goal is to help the academies have some flexibility in delivering the materials as much as possible during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, teaching what classes you can in a virtual classroom will get the academies through the time period of social distancing and the strictest prevention measures. All academies will have to finish the academy by making up all the physical skills missed, the end-of-phase tests, the exit PRT, and the final scenarios in person. This may still cause a

delay depending on how long the COVID-19 directives last. But we are trying to find ways for the academies to continue provide training and graduate recruits as close to their original date as possible.