

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

# 2024 Statewide Listening Tour Action Plan

May 2024

# Training Division Action Plan

## Basic Academies

- **Improve communication between the academy and agencies**
  - Action taken: Implemented new internal processes to track and share student performance and behavior across training venues.
  - In progress: Establishing new expectations to standardize Class Coordinator communications with agencies regarding recruit behaviors and performance. New processes will be implemented June 1, 2024.
- **Reduce burdens to agencies when recruits are in the Basic Academy**
  - Action taken: Implemented SOP to hold basic remediations regionally rather than having recruits return to Salem in most cases.
    - In progress: Coordinators are working out the operational details of regional remediations.
  - Action taken: Evaluated class schedule for the remainder of the biennium for excessive (more than 3) down weeks and awkward beginning/end dates.
    - In progress: Where possible, basic classes across all disciplines are being moved to reduce excessive breaks in training.
  - Action taken: Added academy down weeks and in-service training weeks to the DPSST website ([Basic/Leadership Training and Scheduling](#)) for increased transparency prior to enrollment decisions. With multiple class enrollment options, agencies can factor the class schedule into their enrollment decisions.
  - In progress: Establishing new expectations to standardize Class Coordinator communications with agencies regarding class schedules.
- **Increase transparency of Basic Academy training content and training methodology**
  - In progress: Establishing a quarterly training division newsletter to include staff contact information.
  - In progress: Establishing quarterly “Meet the Trainer” sessions focusing on different training topics (firearms, DTs, EVO, UOF, vehicle stops, etc.)
  - Future: Establish an improved practice of inviting constituents to visit campus.
- **Examine and ensure recruit safety**
  - Action taken (pre-tour): Added Safety Specialist position within Training Division prior to the start of 60-person class pilot that significantly increased the number of recruits on campus
  - Action taken (pre-tour): Reviewed and updated injury protocols prior to first 60-person class.
  - Action taken (pre-tour): Reviewed and updated injury reporting and tracking mechanisms.
  - Action taken (pre- and post-tour): Analyzed and reported injury data for January and April legislative reports. *The BP injury rate is less than 1%.*
  - Action taken: Safety Specialist conducted an audit of outdoor DT training sessions.

## Examine and ensure training quality

- Action taken: Analyzed and reported high-level academy completion data for April legislative report. *The average completion rate for the Basic Police Academy is 91% (inclusive of students with incompletes at time of graduation, some of whom may attain completion after remediation).*
- In progress: Conducting an in-depth analysis of academy completion data, including incompletes (remediations) and departed (academic dismissals, behavior dismissals, agency pull, resignations, etc.).
- In progress: Evaluating options to include more opportunities for report writing within the Basic Academy, including as part of use of force and scenario-based training.
- In progress: Pursuing funding for a Learning Management System to deliver distance learning for pre-academy, to include writing fundamentals.
- In progress: Conducting review of Student Rules & Regulations and practices related to recruit professionalism.

## Regional Training

- **Increase access to regional training**
  - Action taken: Eliminated mandatory minimum enrollment numbers for regional and leadership training classes.
  - In progress: Pursuing funding for a Learning Management System to deliver distance learning for advanced and other regional topics.
  - In progress: Pursuing funding for additional regional training positions to focus on FTO training.
  - In progress: Preparing for a statewide training needs assessment (topics, instructor needs, venue and equipment needs) to develop a new “Four Corners” strategy, which will bring comprehensive mobile annual training events to the farthest reaches of the state.
- **Broaden regional training offerings**
  - Action taken: Held initial planning session between Regional Training and the Center for Policing Excellence to collaborate and deliver statewide training. Topics are focused on leadership, trauma, behavioral health, equity, and bias.
  - Action taken: Held initial planning session between Regional and Fire to collaborate and deliver joint statewide training. Topics are focused on mental health, active threat, and off-road vehicle operations.
  - In progress: Implementing new internal tools and processes to plan for deployment of regional training resources more accurately and efficiently and across training sections.
  - Future: Establish methods to increase the transparency of training offerings, such as the development of a course catalog and improved website.
  - Action taken (pre-tour): Established an Eastern Oregon International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute (IPSLEI) course to be held May-October 2024.
  - Future: Establish a Southern Oregon International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute (IPSLEI) course to be held in 2025.

## Other

- **Reinstate POLCOR (goal 2025)**
  - Future: Develop updated Police to Corrections (POLCOR) curriculum to align with new (May 2024) BCL curriculum.
- **Improve the delivery mechanisms of the PCOD self-study course**
  - In progress: Pursuing funding for a Learning Management System to deliver distance learning for Police Career Officer Development (PCOD) courses.
  - Future: Explore other tools and resources
- **Reinstate in-person PCOD/CCOD courses (goal 2025)**
  - Future: Develop updated PCOD/CCOD curriculum to align with new BP and BCL curriculum. Shift focus of curriculum to meet intended audiences.
  - Future: Add PCOD/CCOD to the 25-27 biennium training calendar (when 60-person BP classes are no longer expected to be utilizing all campus resources).

## Training Division Q&A

### **Why does DPSST run Basic Police defensive tactics sessions in the gravel and other terrain? Does that create an unnecessary risk of injury?**

The goal of our training is to develop durable (accessible for long periods, even after periods of disuse) and flexible (accessible in various contexts and not limited to the contexts experienced during instruction) knowledge and skills. To achieve this, our training is rooted heavily in science, both the science of what and how we train.

Regarding how we train, the conditions of practice for both cognitive and motor-skills training impact learning and transfer. Training conducted in an environment that closely resembles or is the actual environment is more likely to transfer to the job. Authentic training and practice settings are important, and these can include using identical elements, stimulus variability, and varying practice conditions. These practices allow recruits to gain experience with multiple conditions that happen on the job. Additionally, varying practice conditions contributes to more significant learning and transfer over constant practice conditions. For example, changing variables, such as force or duration, within the same movement structure can enhance retention and transfer.

Schmidt's foundational work on schema theory<sup>1</sup> provides two necessary elements to learn and perform a motor task. First, a performer needs to acquire the generalized motor program (GMP) or the action form. Second, the performer needs to learn the schemata that allows the learner to scale the response to the environment. Variations for the same action are available based on scaling features of the movement called parameters, up or down. Parameters include the speed, duration, or level of force used. With practice, including making errors, performers learn the relationship between parameters and outcomes and how outcomes can be manipulated based on modifying the parameters. Constant practice is less useful because it does not help the learner discover the relationship between parameters and outcomes. In contrast, varied practice helps the performer develop a broad schema, which better

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<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, R. A. (1975). A schema theory of discrete motor skill learning. *Psychological Review*, 82, 225–260.

prepares trainees to assess and adjust to changing conditions in the field. Optimal practice conditions should be highly variable.

The DPSST Basic Police Defensive Tactics (DT) program consists of 26 two-hour sessions, 12 of which take place outdoors. Of the 12 outdoor sessions, approximately half include grounded and/or standing fighting on various surfaces (gravel, grass, asphalt, concrete, etc.). The training conditions in these sessions more closely replicate the conditions in the field (recruits wear duty boots rather than athletic shoes, the surface may be uneven or slippery, the temperature and lighting conditions may be suboptimal). During these sessions recruits are given the opportunity to practice scaling their response to the changing environmental conditions developing a broader schema.

Safety is our top priority, and we regularly evaluate and audit our safety protocols and analyze injury data. Our outside training sessions are planned and monitored carefully by qualified instructional staff. The session plan is designed to achieve the outcome of scaling for environmental conditions. It is not designed to take unnecessary risks.

Generally speaking, we see fewer significant injuries when training outside, especially when it comes to knee and ankle injuries related to turning/twisting. The injuries we do see when training outdoors tend to be minor (scratches, scrapes, etc.).

**Why doesn't DPSST's train on pistol-mounted optics in basic firearms training? Does DPSST staff remove optics from recruit's firearms if they show up with them?**

We are continuously assessing the changing tools used by our constituents statewide and adjusting our training and our instructor tools accordingly. Currently, less than half of recruits are arriving at the academy with pistol-mounted optics (PMOs). Just as we evolve our instructor firearms to replicate what is most commonly used in the field, we are evolving our basic firearms program toward increasing use of PMOs. Range staff are currently using Holosun 509T and Aimpoint Acro PMOs. We are awaiting shipments on Sig Romeo 2, Trijicon RCR, and Trijicon HD PMOs.

We currently allow recruits who arrive at the Basic Police Academy with PMOs to use them. Range staff do not remove the optics, except in one instance where the optics and iron sights were incorrectly aligned and caused a training problem for the recruit.

Students attend a total of 13 four-hour firearms sessions during the Basic Police Academy. During the first five sessions, recruits must turn their PMOs off, forcing them to learn to shoot with iron sights. While there are many opinions on this, we are responsible for providing foundational training applicable for police certification statewide, regardless of agency and agency-issued tools. A Basic Police certification allows a recruit to be employed at an agency that uses PMOs as well as one that does not. Additionally, there is significant value in this approach as equipment sometimes fails (batteries deplete, optics break, etc.), and students need to be able to effectively use their firearms in defense of themselves or others even if the PMO stops working. During the remaining eight firearms sessions, students are allowed and encouraged to use their PMOs.

## **Why can't local firearms instructors remediate firearms training or run our own people through the assessments?**

The Basic firearms program is a Board-approved curriculum for a mandated training course. Instructors with primary responsibility for instruction of any portion of a Board-approved curriculum for a mandated training course must be certified as required by OAR 259-008-0080 (Instructors for Mandated Training). OAR 259-008-0085 requires instructors to complete at a minimum the Board-approved Adult Learning Core Course.

In order for local firearms instructors to deliver this course material and conduct the accompanying assessments, they would need to be certified as a DPSST instructor and listed as the instructor of record.

To alleviate some of the burden agencies face when recruits need to remediate training, DPSST will be shifting more remediations to our Regional team, rather than requiring everyone to return to the Salem campus.

## **Why did Patrol Week go away?**

The structure of the Basic Police program was changed with Phase II of the program revision to be more science-based. In 2019, we began eliminating block and siloed training, which is not found to lead to long-term learning and retention<sup>2</sup>. These traditional training practices are designed to produce rapid progress, but these are short-term gains, not long-term learning. Basically, block training looks like it is working, but it is not.

Learning can be maximized through an effective training schedule. We replaced block training with distributed or spaced practice. Essentially, this entails doing less more frequently. We break topics into smaller segments, separate practice sessions with time and other activities, and (like in the real world) everything is interconnected. For example, what previously would have been a four-hour DT session is now two two-hour sessions spaced throughout the week. Distributed practice yields numerous training benefits.

Pairing this with what is known about the transfer of training (training conducted in an environment that closely resembles or is the actual environment is more likely to transfer to the job), we redistributed the block training hours dedicated to patrol week and spread them out throughout the 16 weeks. Rather than waiting until the second half of the academy to apply what they have learned, students now begin scenario training in week 1. Scenarios are closely mapped to course curriculum, and they grow more complex as recruits gain new knowledge and skills.

We occasionally hear from agencies that they miss having the opportunity to observe their recruits participating in Patrol Week. There are still many scenario days throughout the 16 weeks, including several in the last two weeks of training. You are welcome and encouraged to attend anytime!

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forcescience.com/2019/07/keys-to-training-excellence/>

**Is there a way we can get Airway and Circulatory Anatomy and Physiology (ACAP) training? It is hard to find instructors to meet this requirement.**

DPSST teaches two sessions of ACAP to Basic Police classes every month. ACAP 1 is taught in the classroom and lends itself well to being filmed, but ACAP 2 occurs in a mat room. ACAP 1 is a two-hour class, thus it satisfies the certification requirements for constituent agencies' three-year maintenance cycle. Until there are more resources available for this topic (train-the-trainer, regional courses, etc.) we will explore recording this class and releasing it to constituent agencies.

**How did the 60-person classes go? Students reported frequent down time, fewer opportunities for one-on-one instruction, and long lines.**

We acknowledge that the 60-student pilot classes posed logistical challenges. Maintaining safety and quality are always our top priorities, and we put many mitigation efforts into place to ensure both. These included hiring approximately 30 additional full-time instructors, extending training hours into the evening to accommodate more rotations, acquiring additional training vehicles, building additional classrooms and other training spaces, offering meal preorders and sack lunches, and more. Despite these efforts, students still experienced occasional down time and crowded facilities. Our training staff was sensitive to issues that impacted recruits' academy experience, and they were committed to ensuring every recruit got what they needed out of training.

The pilot program will conclude with the graduation of the third and final 60-person class on May 24. Since its inception last November, we have gained valuable insights and will make changes in the event we need to run expanded classes in the future. Safety and quality are our guiding principles, and we are pleased to report that academy graduation and injury rates remained stable throughout the pilot.

**How can we get more mental health training, not just for police, but for corrections and other disciplines?**

DPSST has a behavioral health team available to provide basic and regional training on mental health, trauma, and resiliency. We also have available grant funds to help agencies implement or support CIT or to access other outside training. Agencies may also utilize these grant funds to send their staff to statewide and national conferences and trainings. Regional training and grants are available for all public safety disciplines and interested agencies should reach out to our Center for Policing Excellence to access these resources.

In response to HB 4002, we are working on a partnership with CJC to bring related training statewide.

Our mental health team is also expanding its services to include fire training.

### **Are basic recruits more hesitant to engage or use force?**

Anecdotally, the feedback we receive on this issue represents opposite ends of the spectrum. Primarily, we hear that graduates are better at communicating, engaging with community members, and solving problems. We also occasionally hear that graduates are hesitant to use force. We suspect that is more of an individual issue rather than the norm, but we would like to hear more about this if this is your experience so we can better understand the context of these concerns.

Empirically, we contracted with outside researchers from Washington State University to conduct an evaluation of our Basic Police program from 2018-2023. The evaluation included running every recruit through six video simulations at the end of their academy training. The simulations included a domestic disturbance, vehicle stop, suspicious person call, investigation of suspicious circumstances, disturbance of the peace, and a welfare check. Three of the simulations were branching scenarios that unfolded based on the actions of the recruit, and three were shoot/don't shoot with some requiring deadly force and others not. Some of the findings included a significant increase in recruits dealing with calls in a direct way, as well as a significant increase in recruits' communication skills to de-escalate or defuse a potentially violent situation. We also saw recruits directing more scenarios in a positive direction, repairing encounters that were heading in a negative direction, and less scenarios ending in deadly force.

In our training we emphasize de-escalation when possible and the acceptable use of force within the framework of ORS and current case law. We have also increased training hours for use of force and defensive tactics in the Basic Police Academy, and have built more time into the training schedule for practicing these skills and the decision-making they require.

### **Is DPSST ever going to extend the length of the Basic Corrections Local (BCL) Academy?**

At this time there is no plan to extend the BCL academy. The program just finished a revision which included an analysis of topics and hours. A number of adjustments were made, including removing topics, expanding existing topics, and adding new ones. The new program launched this month.

### **Why aren't there enough BT classes?**

Basic Telecom and Emergency Medical Dispatch courses are funded by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM). DPSST receives funding for a set number of courses each biennium, typically ten. When enrollment numbers exceed the available spots, we employ a few strategies. One is that we increase the number of students per class from 28 to 32. Another strategy is to request funding from OEM for additional classes.

Due to the current BT backlog, we did request additional funds from OEM, and they have agreed to provide funding for two additional classes. One of the additional classes has been added to the class schedule and agencies are being contacted about moving students. We are still deciding when the second class will be inserted. It is also worth noting that the May class did not fill.



# Fire Program Action Plan

## Fire Training Section

- **Offer more cross-disciplinary training for Fire and Law Enforcement**
  - In progress: Joint active shooter training is already in development. It will be presented by Fire and Law Enforcement (LE) staff and offered to both disciplines soon. It's also important to remember that Fire often works in an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) capacity at these events, so also consult the Oregon Health Authority for proper and additional training on active shooter patient care.
  - In progress: An off-road vehicle course is already underway. The course teaches responders how to safely and effectively respond to incidents that occur in off-road situations, and is intended for both Fire and LE.
  - Action taken (pre-tour): A forcible entry train-the-trainer course has been developed to assist not only fire departments, but LE and Department of Corrections staff
  - Action taken (pre-tour): An evidence preservation class taught by DPSST Fire and LE personnel has been developed to teach firefighters how to respond carefully and correctly to an incident involving potential evidence.
  - In-process: Joint behavioral health training is also in the works. See next bullet.
- **Increase behavioral/mental health training for all disciplines**
  - Action taken: The Fire Program has begun working with the Oregon State Fire Marshal, DPSST's Center for Policing Excellence, and the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association to bring solutions to the Oregon fire service.
  - Ongoing: The Fire Program has opened DPSST's campus for several two-day Struggle Well workshops, as well as offered grant funding to associations and departments to promote and provide Behavioral Health initiatives. DPSST will continue to host this kind of training and will also provide grant funding for these initiatives as budget allows.
  - Future: Further work will be done to tie some behavioral health training to include all DPSST disciplines.
- **More leadership classes are needed for middle-level staff**
  - Ongoing: DPSST offers several leadership classes on and off campus:
    - NFPA Fire Officer training through the DPSST Fire District Coordinators
    - National Fire Academy's Leadership Series in regions throughout Oregon in the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025
    - For the first time, the International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute (IPSLEI) class is being taught regionally rather than just on campus.
  - Ongoing: Fire service members can view our [Fire Eventbrite page](#) and [sign up for govdelivery emails](#) to stay informed about additional offerings.
  - Future: We are always open to additional suggestions. If you have an idea for leadership training you'd like to see in your area, please speak to your [Fire District Coordinator](#).
- **Achieving engine boss certification is difficult on the wildland side, especially for volunteers**
  - Ongoing: DPSST works with departments to find solutions, including offering weekend classes and providing information about opportunities for task book completions in wildland schools offered throughout the state.
  - Additional resources are offered in the next bullet.

- **More wildland training offerings are needed**
  - In process: DPSST is working on additional opportunities to bring more wildland training to the state. In the meantime, please speak to your Fire District Coordinator about your needs. Either the Coordinator will be able to teach the class or they may be able to assist you with other resources to bring in the needed training.
  - Ongoing: The Oregon State Fire Marshals Office offers resources for wildland training opportunities. Additional opportunities for wildland training could come from your local Oregon Department of Forestry chapter, some of which have very strong wildland firefighting capabilities and often provide classes and refresher training for local fire departments. DPSST is working to build partnerships to ensure the fire service has access to all the resources available to them.
- **More heavy rescue/extrication training is needed.**
  - Future: DPSST will work on bringing various courses to areas of Oregon if it is needed and as our budget allows. We often work with and bring in subject matter experts, especially in the extrication arena. Please speak with your District Fire Training Coordinator.
- **Isolated areas and small departments have difficulty accessing training and props**
  - Action taken: DPSST no longer requires minimum enrollments when providing classes. However, please keep in mind that we appreciate your assistance in advertising and encouraging your students to attend in order to maximize training resources.
    - Please note that the Skid Truck and Mobile Fire Training Unit are exceptions to the above. Due to high demand, and the expense and time involved in moving these pieces of equipment, DPSST encourages departments to fill as many seats as possible and take advantage of these training opportunities when they are near you.
- **Live fire training of any kind is needed – Vehicle Fire and Flammable Liquids and Gas (FLAG), especially, help people get NFPA Fire Fighter II certifications**
  - Ongoing: DPSST provides such training frequently and routinely throughout the state, and will continue to do so. Work with your District Fire Coordinator on availability and scheduling.
- **DPSST should offer NFPA Fire Fighter I and II academies at the Oregon Public Safety Academy**
  - Action taken: The Fire Program is working toward this. Please be on the lookout for academy offerings in the future.
    - To pull off NFPA Fire Fighter I and II academies, it would be ideal to have assistance from instructors at the departments sending students. One reason for this would be to have additional instructors and expertise when instructing the students, and another is because we utilize a set, nationally recognized curriculum. Having local instructors would help local departments see how curriculum is being taught and let their own firefighters know specific ways their department has to complete tasks, or understand the additional opportunities to teach them specific ways a department completes tasks once they have returned to their departments.
- **More National Fire Academy (NFA) classes should be offered regionally in addition to the classes offered on the DPSST campus**
  - Ongoing: DPSST began a model of offering regional NFA classes in 2023 to much success. DPSST plans to continue offering NFA classes throughout the state. If you are interested in hosting a class, please let us know.

- Please be advised that NFA requires a minimum of 15 registered students and will cancel if that number is not met by 40 days prior to the class. DPSST will help promote the class, but hosting departments should assist with publicizing the training in their areas.
- **There should be an option for a train-the-trainer on DPSST live fire props so that they can be left with departments.**
  - Ongoing: We are working to determine if this will be a possibility by considering and weighing several factors. If live fire prop drop off is a possibility, further measures will also need to be put in place before implementation. We will have further information on this topic in the coming weeks.

## Fire Certification Section

- **DLOs should be able to assist in locating and completing certification forms**
  - Action taken: DPSST is working more closely with DLOs through regular conferences, meetings and communications to help keep them more informed on Fire Certification-related information. The Fire Certification section will include tips on how to assist with certification questions in its monthly communications with DLOs.
  - Ongoing: DPSST offers additional training on anything Fire Certification-related. The Fire Program Manager and Fire Certification Coordinator provide a four-hour class which covers all certification-related topics. The Fire Certification Coordinator also provides one-on-one training via virtual and/or in-person by making a scheduled trip to your department. Please [contact the Fire Certification Coordinator](#) to talk about your Fire Certification options and needs.
- **The fire service would benefit from a return to online paperwork submission**
  - Action taken: A temporary online submission system is available [here](#) while DPSST works to establish a permanent solution.

## Fire Program Q&A

**We've had difficulty scheduling specific training dates with regional training coordinator. How can we resolve this issue?**

District Training Coordinators are available to provide trainings that work best for your firefighters' schedules. DPSST prioritizes customer service, and staff should be communicative and flexible with scheduling. However, please keep in mind that it is best to plan in advance due to prop and Fire District Coordinator availability.

**DPSST cancelled a fire prop the night before it was scheduled; volunteers had already taken time off to attend the training. How can this be avoided moving forward?**

It is never our intent to cancel training at all, let alone last-minute. If we must cancel, it is generally due to inclement weather or a rare personal emergency.

Sometimes the scheduled prop may not be working as expected, but if that is the case the Fire District Coordinator should speak with the Chief or Training Officer to come up with an alternative that DPSST can provide during the scheduled time. The Fire District Coordinator should also reschedule a time to bring the originally requested prop back to the department after it has been serviced.

In the event a cancellation is unavoidable, the Fire District Coordinator should speak with the Chief or Training Officer to reschedule the class for a time that works best for the fire agencies in the area. Among the Fire District Coordinators' main responsibilities and areas of focus is exceptional customer service, and they will work to rectify the issue.

### **Can you provide more maintenance on fire props so they function as expected?**

We regularly service our props to the manufacturer's specifications at a minimum, as well as on an as-needed basis based on their performance and function. Sometimes equipment fails at inopportune times and despite our troubleshooting efforts the issue cannot be resolved during the scheduled timeframe. However, we will always work to rectify the situation by rescheduling the training event for a time when the prop is working as expected.

### **How can we get better curriculum for NFPA Fire Instructor and NFPA Fire Officer classes?**

The Fire Program uses nationally recognized curriculum for most classes that count toward a certification such as NFPA Fire Instructor and NFPA Fire Officer. If there is an issue with the curriculum, please [contact your Fire District Coordinator](#). They may have a way to add additional information that you feel the curriculum is missing or that your area is in specific need of. There is also the opportunity to have an all in-person class rather than hybrid for fire agencies that prefer that method. Communicating your fire agency's needs with your Fire District Coordinator is key to receiving your desired outcome. We do value and respond to feedback.

### **The fingerprinting process is cumbersome. Can DPSST make the process faster?**

We understand the wait is sometimes long to complete the fingerprint requirement before your firefighters may be certified, but there are some steps you can take to speed this process up. All below information can be found on our Fingerprint Requirement Information website [here](#).

- If you know one of your firefighters needs to be fingerprinted because this is their first certification, you can send in their fingerprint card or send them to Fieldprint when you submit the application for certification. To know for certain that someone needs to be fingerprinted, check the "Fingerprint" tab in the [Oregon Fire Service Information Records Inquiry System \(Fire IRIS\)](#).

- Fire agencies may also send in payment with the fingerprint card or when the firefighter gets fingerprinted through Fieldprint. The sooner DPSST receives payment, the sooner we can start the fingerprint process with Oregon State Police (OSP).
- For fire agencies that must wait for an invoice from DPSST to cut a check, we also accept Visa or Mastercard with a completed [credit card authorization form](#). For volunteers, we also accept the [Request for Financial Assistance form](#) which covers the cost of fingerprint processing. Both of these forms may be submitted along with the application for certification and fingerprint card/Fieldprint for faster results.

### **Is there an opportunity for DLOs to have more resources to conduct certain training?**

District Liaison Officers (DLOs) are volunteers whose primary function is to assist the Fire Certification section. Their roles and responsibilities are largely certification related and include conducting accreditation agreement reviews and assisting with Task Performance Evaluation paperwork. They are also available to answer questions and provide guidance when the Fire Certification team is unavailable.

Due to the DLOs' volunteer status with DPSST and their roles being primarily Fire Certification-related, the DPSST Fire Program does not expect the DLOs to provide additional volunteer time to conduct fire training. Additionally, many of our DLOs already work at Oregon fire service agencies and have received permission from their chief or board to volunteer their time for DPSST based on the certification activities stated above. Adding training to their expectations will take them away from their own departments for more time than previously agreed upon.

If there is additional training you seek on anything Fire Certification-related, the Fire Program Manager and Fire Certification Coordinator provide a four-hour class which covers all certification-related topics. The Fire Certification Coordinator also provides one-on-one training via Microsoft Teams and/or in-person. Please contact the Fire Certification Coordinator to discuss your Fire Certification information options and needs.

If you are seeking additional training opportunities, please discuss this with your Fire District Coordinator. Your coordinator may be able to facilitate training opportunities even if they are unavailable or unqualified for the training you're requesting.

### **Professional standards for fire seem to be lower than those for LE. How can we raise the professional standards bar for firefighters?**

The Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) requirements for the fire discipline are voluntary, with the minimum standard being OSHA compliance. Many fire service agencies choose to adhere to these OARs set by DPSST to ensure a safer response to incidents. Participation in these rules establishes minimum qualifications for certified firefighters. While it's commendable that many agencies opt to participate, it's important to note that the OARs for fire certification are voluntary, especially considering that the majority of the Oregon fire service comprises volunteers.

Consequently, there's a recognition that the rules regarding certification revocation and denial in the fire discipline are perceived as less stringent compared to those in the Criminal Justice disciplines. This

understanding stems from the voluntary nature of the OARs and the predominantly volunteer-based composition of the Oregon fire service. As a result, there's a consensus within the Oregon fire service that while there should be repercussions for criminal activity and terminations, they need not be as strict as those outlined in the mandated Criminal Justice OARs.

The Fire Policy Committee (FPC) is integrally involved in setting the OARs related to the fire discipline as well as making the determinations involving revocation and denial of firefighter certifications. We encourage members of the fire service who are interested in helping guide professional standards to participate in the FPC. Please be on the lookout for member vacancies, determine if you fit the vacancy requirements, and submit your application.

**Some areas are trying to re-establish their Regional Training Associations. How can they receive DPSST support to do so?**

The DPSST Fire Program is committed to supporting Regional Training Associations by ensuring the presence of their respective Fire District Coordinators at meetings. Coordinators are available to attend meetings, deliver DPSST reports on certification and training topics, and assist with training needs assessments and course fulfillments. In the event that a coordinator is unavailable, they will arrange for a suitable replacement or provide a written report. Additionally, on occasion, the Fire Program Manager may also attend these meetings to provide regional support, offer further DPSST information, and answer questions.

**Coastal communities could use more help with rope and water rescue training – it's expensive to bring in outside experts to train it. What is available to those communities?**

We recognize the costs associated with providing technical training. If your area already has certified firefighters, we encourage you to reach out to Fire Certification for assistance. They can facilitate access to curriculum from other fire service agencies that have already developed DPSST-approved content relevant to the required topic or standard. individual(s) qualified to teach that curriculum in your area can submit an [F-9F Application to Instruct a Course](#) to be approved to instruct the desired course. If you'd prefer to use your own curriculum that you have developed, please submit an [F-20 Application to Approve a Course](#) in addition to your F-9F.

**Is there a possibility of establishing regional training centers?**

DPSST does have access to training sites at some of our district locations, but we often find that fire departments are unable to travel to these locations for training. This is mostly because they cannot afford to send firefighters away from response areas due to the low number of available firefighters within the department. The real issue is fire departments are short of firefighters, which is why DPSST is working to build a full complement of fire props for each district to be able to deliver training at departments. This will allow fire departments and members to remain in service for responses and still receive training.

# Professional Standards Division Action Plan

- **DPSST should resume distributing the Ethics Bulletin, which highlighted moral fitness cases and was a valuable resource for officers and agencies**
  - Action: DPSST will review the feasibility of resuming distribution of the Ethics Bulletin, which was replaced by an online database of officer suspensions and revocations after the passing of HB 4207 in 2020.
- **Officers who conducting training doesn't help trainers achieve intermediate certification**
  - Action: DPSST commits to convening a workgroup in 2025 to review the qualifications for upper-level certifications and will include the constituent request to consider applying instructor hours to upper levels of certification. Currently, hours spent as an instructor delivering training can't be applied toward obtaining Intermediate and Advanced Certification [OAR 259-008-0090(7)]. The requirements for Intermediate and Advanced certifications have not been reviewed since 2016.  
In the meantime, please note that a person may submit the training they received and completed to become an instructor, and those training hours are applicable to intermediate and advanced certifications. This also applies to training the person receives and completes to enhance or maintain their instructor skills.
- **DPSST forms and IRIS need upgrades, and training on how to complete forms would be helpful**
  - Action: Professional Standards has announced an interactive online training session scheduled for June 12 to go over forms, the website and the database. The training will be recorded for those unable to attend. DPSST will seek input on the effectiveness of the training and make necessary modifications. DPSST has also begun providing specific training to agencies who desire comprehensive one-on-one assistance, including for new staff agency leadership transitions.
- **The Professional Standards division's communication needs improvement**
  - Action: The division is currently reviewing processes and practices to improve customer service responses to our constituents. The new Professional Standards Division Director and Division Manager are determined to improve in this area as part of the overall communication strategy. Constituents may always reach Division Director Kathy McAlpine at [Kathy.mcalpine@dpsst.oregon.gov](mailto:Kathy.mcalpine@dpsst.oregon.gov) or 503-576-9422.

## Professional Standards Division Q&A

**Citizen complaints can be prolific, and investigations are very difficult for small agencies when supervisors are also working patrol. It's also costly to hire third-party investigators. Can DPSST create a regional investigative unit to help small agencies investigate complaints?**

DPSST lacks the authority to conduct investigations on behalf of an employing agency. As a state agency, DPSST's authority is established by the Legislature. DPSST's investigative authority is limited to a person's qualifications for employment, training, or certification under ORS 181A.640, which outlines the grounds for denying, suspending, or revoking certification.

**The timeliness of Professional Standards cases needs improvement. An agency had a case held up for several years, and when it came before the committee the media reported on it and the department had to relive it.**

Policy committees meet quarterly, and the number of cases that a committee can review varies depending on the complexity of the case and the number of documents to review. A committee can average 3-12 cases, sometimes a case will have a couple hundred pages. All the committee members have full-time jobs, so we are respectful of their workload.

DPSST Professional Standards Staff are not always in control of when a case is ready to be presented to the committee. If there are pending criminal charges, those must be adjudicated and that can take months or even years. DPSST also waits until employment arbitration has been completed. If there is civil litigation, that can also hold up the certification review.

There are several cases where the employee is not intending to get back into a public safety profession and those cases will be a lower priority to those whose individuals are seeking public safety employment or have obtained employment and need a final resolution on their certification status.

DPSST commits to improved communication with agency heads that want updates on a former employee's Professional Standards case. That information is also on the professional standards database, and we will continue to promote awareness of what is readily available.