

**UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

No. 1200

Supercedes: NA

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Page: 1 OF 7

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**FIELD TRAINING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM**

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- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the organization and administration of the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP). A well-structured FTEP will improve the overall effectiveness of law enforcement service to the community by establishing a training and appraisal system for newly hired police officers.
  
- II. **GOAL:** The goal of the FTEP is to produce a “solo patrol officer”; a well-trained officer that is capable of performing the most basic job responsibilities by themselves after successfully completing the FTEP.
  
- III. **POLICY:** It shall be the policy of the Upper Merion Township Police Department to maintain an effective and current FTEP for all newly hired police officers. All newly hired police officers shall complete the FTEP prior to assignment as a solo patrol officer.
  
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

**PROBATIONARY OFFICER:**

An officer is considered to be a probationary officer once he/she has obtained a valid certification as a police officer from the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission (MPOETC). A one-year probationary period shall begin on the date of certification as determined by MPOETC.

**TRAINEE OFFICER:**

An officer is considered to be a trainee officer from the date of hiring until successful completion of the FTEP.

**OBSERVABLE HOURS:**

A trainee officer's training hours while in the FTEP shall be considered to be observable when:

1. The officer has a valid certification as a police officer from MPOETC;
2. The officer is being observed by an approved Departmental FTO;
3. The officer is in uniform and is being observed in a true work setting.

**NON-OBSERVABLE or LIMBO HOURS:**

A trainee officer's training hours shall be considered non-observable when any one of the criteria outlined in the definition of observable hours is not met.

**V. ORGANIZATION:**

A. **FIELD TRAINING UNIT COMMANDER:** The Field Training Unit Commander shall be a Lieutenant or any other Command officer designated by the Chief of Police. The FTEP Unit Commander shall be responsible for:

1. The overall command and evaluation of the FTEP Unit and its personnel.
2. Maintaining close contact with the FTEP Unit Coordinator to ensure that all departmental goals are being accomplished.
3. Reviewing all reports and documentation pertaining to the trainee officer, and keeping the Chief of Police apprised of the trainee officer's status.
4. Make recommendations to the Chief of Police concerning the trainee officer's suitability for a solo officer position.

B. **FIELD TRAINING UNIT COORDINATOR:** The Field Training Unit Coordinator shall be a Sergeant or a Corporal designated by the Chief of Police. The FTEP Unit Coordinator shall be responsible for:

1. Supervision of the FTEP Unit and its personnel.
2. Scheduling and directing field training assignments.
3. Reviewing all daily observation reports submitted by the FTEP Unit and monitoring the development of trainee officers.
4. Keeping the FTEP Unit Commander apprised of the trainee officer's performance including the forwarding of all training reports.

5. Assisting the FTEP Unit Commander with evaluating the FTEP Unit and its personnel.
6. Maintaining all FTEP records.
7. The FTEP Unit Coordinator shall act as a liaison to the Montgomery County Police Academy and other police academies as necessary.

C. **FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS (FTO):** FTO's shall be selected from those officers who have applied to serve in this program. FTO candidates shall have a minimum of four years police service with the Upper Merion Township Police Department. The Chief of Police shall make final selection for FTO assignments. Officers selected to be FTO's must successfully complete approved FTO training prior to assuming their duties, and shall attend in-service training as required. The FTO shall be responsible for:

1. Training, supervising and evaluating trainee officers assigned to him/her as directed by the FTEP Unit Coordinator.
2. Complete daily evaluation reports and other documentation on the trainee officer's performance and submit them to the FTEP Unit Coordinator.
3. Assisting the FTEP Unit Coordinator with evaluating the FTEP.

## **VI. PROCEDURES:**

A. **TRAINING SCHEDULE:** Each trainee officer shall complete a field training program that consists of no less than three hundred (300) observable hours between Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3 and the Final Phase of the program unless otherwise directed by the Chief of Police (prior experience as a certified police officer is an example of a case when the Chief of Police may reduce the number of observable hours). The trainee shall be assigned to a Primary and a Secondary FTO for the training program. The Primary and Secondary FTO's shall be assigned to opposite shifts. Upon completion of Phase 3 of the FTEP, the Primary FTO, after consulting with all other involved FTO's, shall indicate whether or not the trainee has reached a level of competency which allows him/her to work on their own. This information will be reviewed by the FTEP Unit Coordinator who will consult with the FTEP Commander and give a recommendation if the trainee will advance to the Final Phase or enter an Extension Phase for remedial training. If at the end of the Extension Phase the trainee still has not successfully completed the program, the Chief of Police shall decide the next course of action.

B. **TRAINING PROGRAM OUTLINE:**

The Field Training Program shall consist of the following phases:

1. **ORIENTATION PHASE:** The newly hired officer will become familiar with the Department and its procedures during this phase. During this period the

trainee will be introduced to the various aspects of the Department's operations. The trainee will also be issued all essential equipment and received focused training required to proceed to the next phase. This phase shall last a maximum of eighty (80) hours and any hours in this phase are to be considered non-observable hours.

2. PHASE 1: Following the Orientation Phase and once the trainee officer has obtained his/her MPOETC Police Officer Certification; he/she will begin this phase. The trainee will begin learning the Township boundaries, major landmarks and traffic routes. The trainee will primarily observe, rather than participate in, the majority of incidents encountered unless otherwise directed by his/her FTO. The trainee will advance to Phase 2 upon successful completion of this phase.
3. PHASE 2: The trainee officer will encounter intensified training and participation in job-related tasks in this phase. The trainee will assume increased responsibility for patrol, investigative, and arrest procedures, along with report writing and case preparation. The trainee will advance to Phase 3 upon successful completion of this phase.
4. PHASE 3: The trainee will handle the majority of the incidents encountered in this phase. The FTO's role will be primarily supportive. Intervention by the FTO should be minimal so that the FTO can properly evaluate the officer in preparation for regular assignment to the patrol division. The FTO shall take over for the trainee whenever he/she: is about to commit an unlawful act or violate Department policy, is about to place him/herself or others in danger, is uncertain of what to do or is about to embarrass the Department. The trainee will advance to the Final Phase upon successful completion of this phase.
5. EXTENSION PHASE: If the trainee has not progressed to the satisfaction of his/her FTO and is not meeting the requirements of the program, the trainee shall not advance to the Final Phase. The FTEP Unit Commander may then add this phase to the trainee's schedule. This phase shall last a maximum of one hundred and sixty hours (160 hours). At the end of this phase, the trainee must be in good standing in order to rotate to the Final Phase or the trainee will face termination. If at the end of the Extension Phase the trainee still has not successfully completed the program, the Chief of Police shall decide the next course of action.
6. FINAL PHASE: This phase is a repeat of the work conditions in Phase 3 with the trainee and the FTO undergoing a role reversal. This phase is a bridge to assist the trainee into their role as a solo officer. The trainee will manage the majority of incidents encountered while the FTO will primarily observe. The trainee will complete the Field Training Program upon completion of this phase.

Upon completion of the Field Training Program, the probationary officer shall:

- a. Be familiar with Department policies and procedures.
  - b. Be familiar with the geography of the Township.
  - c. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the most commonly used sections of the Crimes and Vehicle Codes.
  - d. Recognize standard Department forms and complete them accurately in a logical sequence that the reader can understand.
  - e. Demonstrate proper interviewing techniques.
  - f. Demonstrate the ability to maintain self-control while taking the proper course of action during most situations encountered.
  - g. Demonstrate the ability to understand proper radio procedures.
  - h. Demonstrate proper officer safety procedures at all times when responding to calls, managing police investigations, conducting citizen encounters and handling suspects.
7. MENTOR PHASE: Upon completion of the Field Training Program, the officer previously considered a trainee, is now considered a “solo probationary officer”. The shift supervisor shall ensure that one of the FTO’s assigned to the “solo probationary officer” is positioned to answer any questions, provide impromptu training sessions and assist with the completion of reports before the “solo probationary officer” turn them in for final approval. This phase shall last no longer than eighty four (84) hours.
- C. TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS: During the FTEP, the trainee officer will be scheduled to work when the assigned FTO is working. If the assigned FTO is unavailable for his/her regular shift, the trainee officer shall ride with the shift supervisor or his/her designee. The trainee officer will be rotated between the day and night shifts while in the FTEP.
- D. EVALUATION PROCESS: The FTO shall use the FTEP Training Checklist as a guide in the training of the trainee officer. During the Orientation Phase, the FTEP Unit Coordinator shall furnish the trainee officer with a FTEP Training Checklist and any other necessary documents and materials.
1. Each trainee officer shall retain the FTEP Training Checklist during his/her period of assignment to the FTEP. The FTO shall use the FTEP Training Checklist to record the progress of the trainee officer. The FTEP Training Checklist shall be made a part of the trainee’s Field Training record upon completion of the program.

2. The FTO shall complete a Daily Observation Report for the trainee officer for each shift worked. Guidelines for evaluation of trainees by the FTO are listed in the Standardized Evaluation Guidelines. This report should be reviewed by the FTO with the trainee on a daily basis. The completed daily observation report shall be submitted to the FTEP Unit Coordinator after being reviewed by the patrol shift supervisor.
3. The Sergeant for the patrol team the trainee officer is assigned to shall complete a Sergeant's Monthly Evaluation of Probationary Officer Report for each month that the trainee officer works with his/her team. This report should be completed for every month within the officer's probationary period including the months after he/she completes the FTEP and up through the end of his/her probationary period. Guidelines for the evaluation of trainees by the Team Sergeant are listed in the Standardized Evaluation Guidelines. The Sergeant's Monthly Observation Report shall be submitted to the FTEP Unit Commander for review.
4. If a trainee officer or a probationary officer disagrees with any observation/evaluation report received as part of the FTEP, the trainee officer or probationary officer may submit a memorandum through the trainees' Squad Supervisor to the FTEP Unit Coordinator. If the Squad Supervisor and the FTEP Unit Coordinator cannot resolve the issue, they will refer it to the FTEP Commander for review. The Chief of Police will have the final determination in the dispute in the event that the FTEP Commander cannot reach a resolution. A memorandum on the final determination shall be placed in the trainee/probationary officer's field training record.
5. At the end of the FTEP period, a recommendation shall be made to the FTEP Unit Commander by the FTEP Unit Coordinator regarding the advancement or termination of the probationary officer. The FTEP Commander will be responsible for notifying the Chief of Police of this recommendation. Upon successful completion of the FTEP, the FTEP Unit Coordinator will complete a memorandum for the appropriate accreditation file.
6. Termination can be recommended at any time during the officer's probationary period if the officer is not performing at a satisfactory level. Remedial training efforts may be made to help the probationary officer succeed before a recommendation for termination is made. At any time during the probationary period, if an officer is shown to have violated any laws or department policies and procedures, termination may be recommended. The termination recommendation and supporting documentation shall be forwarded through the FTEP Unit Commander to the Chief of Police who shall make the final decision concerning the dismissal of the probationary officer.
7. The FTEP Unit Coordinator shall meet with each probationary officer at the end of his/her assignment to the FTEP to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The FTEP Commander may attend the final assessment meeting if necessary. Regular meetings shall be scheduled with Field Training Personnel to review, evaluate and update the FTEP.

APPROVED: Thomas Nolan  
Chief Thomas Nolan

DATED: 09/20/2019

APPROVED: Jeremy Johnson  
Captain Jeremy Johnson

DATED: 09/20/2019

TO BE REVIEWED: ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTION: All Police Officers  
Township Manager  
File