

P.O.S.T. LAW CHANGES

The issue is the need for changes in the state statutes regarding the certification of sworn law enforcement officers to address the following:

1. Retired police personnel are not permitted to maintain their POST certification.
2. Requirements, certification and training for the position of Police Chief, Assistant Chief and Deputy Chief need to be different from other sworn police positions.
3. State Police officers should also be POST certified.

BACKGROUND

Our Federal Government has set the pace, when it comes to retired police officers, under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004. The law allows retired police officers to carry concealed firearms throughout the United States and its Territories. Title 18, Chapter 44, Section 926C.

With the same concept in mind, if retired officers are allowed to maintain their certification, any police department in the state in a time of emergency can utilize them in an official capacity.

There sometimes comes a point in time when a retired police officer would like to apply for a position of Police Chief or Assistant or Deputy Police Chief or even apply to reenter the law enforcement field in different police department.

At this point in time the Connecticut Statute states that, anyone who wants to become a sworn police officer in the state of Connecticut, with the exception of the Connecticut State Police Department, must be certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST). And according to Thomas Flaherty, the Executive Director of the Police Officer Standards & Training Council, "Certification is contingent upon active employment in a law enforcement unit".

This is not a problem if the retired officer is still within the time limit of his/her last certification. If the certification has lapsed, POST can allow the applicant to fulfill the POST requirements within one year of hire. That may require the applicant to return to a certified police academy and complete entry-level training within one year. This applies to all sworn positions, up to and including police administration, i.e. Police Chief.

I think we all agree that the position of Chief of Police, Assistant Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief are, in fact, administrative or management positions. That is to say that a good police chief need not be the one who has the most criminal arrests, stopped the most traffic violators or the most effective in child and family related issues. A good chief must be the best possible administrator/manager. A Police Chief is one who knows how to deal with personnel and how to manage the finances and other needs of the police department operation. Therefore we need to evaluate the training needs for the Chief.

I don't think a police chief needs to know how to make an arrest, or the mechanics of a felony motor vehicle stop.

POST certification and re-certification standards must be different from those of the line staff and must be consistent throughout the state of Connecticut including the state police department. No police department authorized in this state should be allowed to be above the law governing the law enforcement profession serving in this state.

Additionally, the Connecticut Department of Public Safety, State Police are not required to be certified by POST although ALL other police officers in the state of Connecticut must be POST certified.

It would appear that police officers require the same knowledge of the state motor vehicle laws and criminal laws regardless of which city or town they work in. State of Connecticut motor vehicle statutes apply equally whether it's on local streets or state highways. When it comes to crimes, again, the state statutes apply the same in cities as they do on the highways. In fact there are some towns in the state of Connecticut where there is a State "Resident" Trooper assigned to patrol the streets. In some of those towns there are also Special Constables who are required to be POST certified. I do not see the rationale in that double standard. Why would a state trooper, who is not POST certified be allowed to work in a local setting where if that town had their own police force their officers would have to be POST certified? In reality, Connecticut State Police Officers investigate and enforce criminal laws much less frequently than police officers in most cities or towns in this state.

If a state trooper wants to leave the state police and work in a local department, he/she must apply to be POST certified within one year of hire. If a local police officer wants to become a state police officer he/she must attend the state police academy. I think certification for both the state police and local police should be the same and certification made by one entity.

RECERTIFICATION

Any police officer that retires in good standing and without a disqualifying injury should be allowed to maintain their POST certification.

Re-certification will be at the expense of the retired officer. There would be no requirement on the part of the state police or any local police department to provide the required course training free of charge.

Retired officers may apply to any POST certified training academy or facility or POST approved instructor for a seat in a scheduled training session.

If the retired officer cannot secure a seat at a local police academy after 2 attempts, application must be submitted to POST who must, within 6 months of proper request is made, seat the applicant at a location of it's choice, within the state of Connecticut.

The cost of each training course will be the responsibility of the applicant.

POST shall establish a standardized fee schedule for all required courses. The fee should be reasonable and affordable. POST must advertise said fee schedule annually.

Any POST certified training academy /facility or POST approved instructor may waive the course fee with the approval of the person in charge of the facility hosting the training.

The training academy /facility or POST certified instructor shall be required to submit the appropriate training documents to POST to be recorded.

POST shall be responsible for notification of the retired officer, as to any required training needed to maintain certification, prior to expiration.

When an officer in good standing retires, the police department shall notify the officer of the option to maintain POST certification.

Re-certified retired police officers shall retain their Police Officer Certification Number that they held during their employment and shall, upon completion of re-certification training, be issued a "**Retired Police Officer Certification**" ID card. Said card shall also include the officer's rank at the time of retirement. Retirement up-grades not included.

Sample:

State of Connecticut POLICE OFFICER STANDARDS and TRAINING COUNCIL Retired Police Officer Certification	
This is to certify that, _____ ID# _____	
Retired from _____ Rank _____	
has met all of the requirements of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council and Section 7-294d of the Connecticut General Statutes and is hereby certified to perform Police work in the State Of Connecticut.	
_____	_____
Date of Birth	Date of Certification
_____	_____
Expiration Date	Police Officer Standards & Training Council