

Report to the Legislature

PEACE OFFICER TRAINING ON TBI (TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY)
AND PTSD (POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER)



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Foreward by

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Executive Director
Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training

Report to the Legislature:
Peace Officer Training on TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)
and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

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Standards and Training

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on Peace Officer Standards and Training
is to continually enhance the professionalism
of California law enforcement in serving
its communities.**

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FOREWORD

S B 1296 (Correa) was signed into law in September 2010, adding California Penal Code Section [13515.36](#), which requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to create a training course for peace officers on how to recognize and interact with persons suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The Penal Code also directs POST to submit a report to the Legislature on the extent to which peace officers are receiving adequate training in how to interact with persons suffering from TBI or PTSD by June 30, 2012.

The mission of the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training is to continually enhance the professionalism of California law enforcement in serving its communities. The POST Report to the Legislature: Peace Officer Training on Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is intended to assist the Legislature in determining the adequacy of continuing education for law enforcement on these topics. Research for this report was drawn from the expertise of law enforcement, community members, and mental health services staff statewide.

In conjunction with this report, POST has developed a two-hour DVD training course entitled PTSD and TBI. This accompanying report to the Legislature describes the various types of relevant POST-certified training courses available to California law enforcement. These resources are available to law enforcement agencies through POST.

The Commission appreciates the valuable contributions made by the PTSD and TBI Ad Hoc Committee in developing the training materials. Comments and questions concerning this report or the PTSD and TBI training DVD may be directed to Tamara Evans, Senior Consultant at (916) 227-0473 or by email to Tamara.Evans@post.ca.gov.

PAUL CAPPITELLI
Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2010, [SB 1296 \(Correa\)](#) was signed into law, adding California Penal Code Section [13515.36](#), which requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to create a training course for peace officers on how to recognize and interact with persons suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Additionally, the Penal Code directs POST to submit a report to the Legislature “on the extent to which peace officers are receiving adequate training in how to interact with persons suffering from TBI or PTSD” by June 30, 2012.¹

Pursuant to the Penal Code requirements, POST developed a new training DVD for law enforcement officers, PTSD and TBI, available in late June 2012. This accompanying report describes the types and amount of related POST-certified training courses available to California law enforcement.

¹ http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb_1251-1300/sb_1296_bill_20100929_chaptered.pdf

DEFINITIONS**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

PTSD is a potentially debilitating anxiety disorder triggered by exposure to a traumatic experience such as an interpersonal event like physical or sexual assault, exposure to disaster, accidents, combat, or witnessing a traumatic event. There are three main clusters of symptoms: first, those related to re-experiencing the event; second, those related to avoidance and arousal; and third, the distress and impairment caused by the first two symptom clusters.²

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

TBI is caused when external forces are applied to the head and brain. These forces can result from a blow or jolt to the head, an object penetrating the head/brain, “whiplash” (as in a car crash), or pressure caused by a blast or explosion. Blasts are a leading cause of TBI for active duty military personnel in war zones.³ TBI ranges from “mild” (a brief change in mental status or consciousness) to “severe” (an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury)⁴. Such injuries can result in impaired physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning.

² National Institute of Health, Hetrick SE, Purcell R, Garner B, Parslow R. [Combined Pharmacotherapy and Psychological Therapies for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#). Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2010, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD007316. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007316.pub2.

³ Champion HR, Holcomb JB, Young LA. Injuries From Explosions. *Journal of Trauma* 2009; 66(5): 1 468–1476.

⁴ Hauret, Keith. Awareness of TBI Causes, Symptoms Important to Soldiers, Families. <http://www.army.mil/article/74830>

INTERACTIONS

Both military service members and non-military individuals can suffer from PTSD or TBI. PTSD in civilians may follow a natural disaster such as a flood or fire, or traumatic events such as physical or sexual assault, domestic abuse, or acts of terrorism. The primary causes of TBI in the civilian population are falls, motor vehicle accidents, being struck by an object, and assaults. More recently, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been the longest U.S. combat operations since Vietnam⁵, and have generated increased public awareness of mental health issues in the military. Military service members returning from Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) are at increased risk for PTSD, TBI, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and other mental health problems.⁶ Outward symptoms of both PTSD and TBI may appear as cognitive impediments (memory, attention and concentration difficulties) and emotional or behavioral problems (irritability, depression, anxiety, and behavioral dyscontrol).

Persons with mental illness are not more likely to be lawbreakers; however these individuals' behavior may unintentionally bring them to the attention of the criminal justice system. Most law enforcement calls involving persons with mental illness are the result of emotional crisis, not criminal behavior.⁷ In addition, the re-introduction of community policing in the 1990's has resulted in law enforcement agencies placing increased emphasis on assertive responses to "quality-of-life" crimes. Minor illegal offenses like trespassing, petty theft, panhandling, public urination, and littering often typify the behavior of homeless people with untreated mental health issues. A 2009 study revealed that jail inmate populations still have a disproportionate number of persons with mental illness.⁸ Without supportive services and treatment, persons with mental illness committing "nuisance" offenses could be trapped in a repetitive cycle of arrest, jail stays, and return to the streets where they commit more low-level illegal acts that result in their re-arrest.⁹

⁵ PTSD in Service Members and New Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars: A Bibliography and Critique in PTSD Research Quarterly, 20(1). Winter 2009.

⁶ Mental Health Effects of Serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, US Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for PTSD. <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/overview-mental-health-effects.asp> Updated December 20, 2011

⁷ "Building Safer Communities: Improving Police Response to Persons with Mental Illness," Recommendations from International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) National Summit, June 2010.

⁸ Council of State Governments Press Release 6/01/09. http://consensusproject.org/press_releases/new-study-documents-high-prevalence-of-serious-mental-illnesses-among-nations-jail-populations

⁹ IACP National Summit, June 2010.

LAW ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES

The challenges involved in law enforcement's response to individuals with mental illnesses have received national media coverage in recent years. These calls for service can be disproportionately time-consuming and difficult to resolve, and in rare cases, can be dangerous for law enforcement and civilians. When contacting individuals with mental illness, police had three traditional options:

1. Transport them to a receiving psychiatric facility;
2. Use informal verbal skills to de-escalate the situation; or
3. Arrest the individual if they pose a threat to themselves or others..

These possible actions arise from basic concepts that guide peace officers in all citizen encounters—the officer's duty to protect and serve the community and the laws that authorize an officer to involuntarily protect those behaving irrationally who may harm themselves or others.¹⁰

The "sequential intercept model" is based on the assumption that "the presence of mental illness should not result in unnecessary arrest or incarceration" merely because of lack of access to appropriate treatment, housing or other supportive services.¹¹ From a desire to improve their interactions with people with mental illnesses, some law enforcement agencies have turned to innovative training and resources for solutions. Examples include specialized peace officer teams, community-collaborative programs, and crisis intervention training. Over the years, numerous specialized training courses have been made available to California law enforcement to increase officers' awareness and sensitivity, and improve service to the mentally ill by connecting them to the appropriate resources. Law enforcement training on interacting with persons with mental illnesses has shown to be most effective when it includes consultation with mental health professionals and other administrative and social service systems.¹² Through training courses such as Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), California peace officers have learned about the mental health system and subsequently engaged in systemic problem-solving to improve the agencies' services.

¹⁰ L.A. Teplin, "[Keeping the Peace: Police Discretion and Mentally Ill Persons](#)," National Institute of Justice Journal 244 (2000): 8-15.

¹¹ Mark R. Munetz and Patricia A. Griffin. "Use of the Sequential Intercept Model as an Approach to Decriminalization of People With Serious Mental Illness." *Psychiatric Services* 57:4, April 2006. www.ps.psychiatryonline.org

¹² H.J. Steadman, K.A. Stainbrook, P. Griffin, J. Draine, R. DuPont, and C. Horey, "[A Specialized Crisis Response Site as a Core Element of Police-Based Diversion Programs](#)," *Psychiatric Services* 52 (2001): 219-222.

To address the prevalence of people with mental illnesses involved in the criminal justice system, law enforcement agencies have partnered with the justice system, mental health and community partners and expanded their training and community services to include crisis intervention team programs and participation in post-arrest diversion for both misdemeanor and felony charges. The diversion programs are sometimes referred to as “mental health courts” and “veterans’ courts,” and re-direct individuals from jail to treatment programs. Another method employed by law enforcement agencies is the establishment and training of law enforcement and mental health co-responder teams.¹³ These approaches allow access to community-based treatment instead of arrest and incarceration for individuals with mental illness.



¹³ Matt Schwarzfeld, Melissa Reuland and Martha Plotkin. (2008) ["Improving Responses to People with Mental Illness: The Essential Elements of a Specialized Law Enforcement-Based Program."](#) Council of State Governments and Police Executive Research Forum, New York.

TRAINING COURSES

Established by the California Legislature in 1959 to set minimum selection and training standards for law enforcement, POST currently certifies and manages over 5,800 mandated and elective training courses for law enforcement personnel. Often the training courses are developed through collaboration between peace officers and other government or community agencies. These connections allow agencies to share resources and improve the quality of and access to services in communities.

POST maintains comprehensive training records for its certified law enforcement training classes. Delivery methods for law enforcement training include the Basic Courses (academy training), Advanced Officer Training (for incumbent officers), DVD-based training modules, and online training courses provided through POST's secure Learning Portal website. The latter are examples of distance learning strategies employed to reduce training costs and allow widespread distribution of training courses, where possible. Law enforcement agencies may elect to improve and/or refresh officer skills through advanced officer training courses, either those developed by POST or courses developed in-house and certified by POST. Training presenters may choose between using agency instructors with subject matter expertise, inviting instructors from other agencies (such as mental health), or contracting for service from private vendors. Course costs depend on the option selected. For quality purposes, POST requires submission of an outline of the course curriculum, an hourly schedule, a course budget if applicable, and instructor resume(s) verifying that instructors possess requisite knowledge and skills prior to course certification.

Basic Courses

The Regular Basic Course (academy) is the entry-level training requirement for many California peace officers, as specified in POST Regulation 1005. At present, there are 39 POST-certified basic training academies in California. The Regular Basic Course curriculum is divided into 41 individual topics, called Learning Domains. The Specialized Investigators' Basic Course is the entry-level training requirement for some California investigators. The Specialized Investigators' Basic Course is divided into 37 Learning Domains. Each Learning Domain contains the minimum required foundational information for given subjects.

POST Learning Domain 37: People with Disabilities

POST Learning Domain 37: *People with Disabilities* consists of training for new peace officers on mental illnesses and disorders, including neurological disorders. Officers are not trained to diagnose, but to recognize behavioral indicators. The core curriculum includes behavioral indicators that may be generally associated with people affected by mental illness, indicators officers may use to help determine if a person affected by a mental illness is a danger to self or others, and appropriate tactical actions when responding to a call involving a person with a mental illness. Learning Domain 37 is mandated for both the Regular Basic Course and the Specialized Investigators' Basic Course. The minimum requirement for this segment of training is six hours.

The POST Requalification Course is available to individuals who have successfully completed a POST-certified Regular or Specialized Investigators' Basic Course, the Basic Course Waiver (BCW) process (e.g., out-of-state officers), or who have been awarded a POST Basic Certificate and have a three-year or longer break in service. Learning Domain 37 is required for the POST Requalification Course and the minimum requirement for this segment of training is two hours.

Advanced Officer Training

As of January 2012, California agencies employed 93,466 law enforcement personnel, including 79,559 fulltime peace officers, 5,900 reserve peace officers, and 8,007 public safety dispatchers. POST works with over 700 law enforcement training presenters, as well as a number of agencies not in the POST program, to certify quality law enforcement training and to ensure the delivery of that training. POST-certified training courses are available to qualified law enforcement personnel. The following courses contain information and training for law enforcement on mental health issues, including PTSD and TBI. For the purpose of this report, course descriptions and attendance data were compiled for the last five fiscal years (2007-08 through 2011-12).

Training Course: CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING (CIT) – 20801

The CIT for Law Enforcement concept is based on a successful crisis intervention program that began in Memphis, Tennessee. Officers are trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations and ensure the safety and diversion of the mental health consumer to a treatment center. CIT teaches law enforcement officers to become more adept at dealing with mental health consumers, individuals with substance abuse issues, and individuals in crisis. CIT is taught by specially trained law enforcement personnel, mental health professionals, mental health consumers and family advocates. The training includes identification of types of mental illness, verbal skills for de-escalation of potentially violent situations, specifics on suicide intervention, and a mental health system overview.¹⁴

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
Amador Co Sheriff's Dept	0	0	0	0	72	72
Butte College	0	0	26	17	18	61
Cabrillo College	0	11	0	0	0	11
Calaveras Co Sheriff's Dept	0	0	0	12	12	12
College Of The Redwoods	48	66	23	45	18	200
El Dorado Co Sheriff's Dept	0	75	0	66	0	141
Fresno Co Sheriff's Dept	0	0	46	0	0	46
Fresno Police Dept	0	0	39	0	0	39
Fullerton Police Dept	0	0	0	0	182	182
Golden West College	0	169	235	137	365	906
Kern Co Sheriff's Dept	0	0	0	21	16	37
Marin Co Sheriff's Dept	31	0	29	27	0	87
Merced Co Sheriff's Dept	0	46	11	0	0	57
Modoc Co Sheriff's Dept	0	8	0	0	0	8
Oakland Police Dept	0	0	0	0	151	151
Orange Police Dept	0	0	8	8	0	16
Petaluma Police Dept	0	77	0	0	0	77
Redding Police Dept	24	11	0	0	0	35
Riverside Co Sheriff's Dept	0	0	0	0	73	73
Riverside Police Dept	211	93	21	12	6	343
San Bernardino Sheriff's Dept	66	171	106	89	23	455
San Diego Police Dept	0	0	156	178	37	371
San Francisco Police Dept	127	113	111	0	52	403
San Luis Obispo Police Dept	30	21	21	17	0	89
San Mateo Co Sheriff's Ofc	133	94	56	28	55	366
Santa Clara Co Sheriff's Dept	32	89	92	115	111	439
Sonoma Co Sheriff's Ofc	344	52	51	48	48	543
South Bay Regional Training	0	0	62	28	0	90
Stanislaus Co Sheriff's Ofc	45	27	19	40	41	172

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

¹⁴ Mental Health Crisis Services, Sonoma County, California Department of Health Services
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/about/pdf/mhsa/crisisresponseservices.pdf>

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
Training For Safety Inc.	0	94	50	0	16	160
Ukiah Police Dept	0	0	23	28	0	51
Vacaville Police Dept	0	0	39	0	0	39
Ventura Co Sheriff's Dept	57	61	60	80	120	378
Visalia Police Dept	0	7	36	21	45	109
Woodland Police Dept	0	50	22	27	29	128
Total	1,148	1,335	1,342	1,032	1,490	6,347

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: **CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM FIRST RESPONDER – 20791**

This course provides contemporary training for law enforcement personnel who are assigned to local agency crisis intervention teams. Law enforcement personnel and emergency dispatchers learn techniques in crisis intervention for mentally distraught individuals. Course topics include the neurobiology of mental health, community mental health programs, officer safety considerations, report writing, crisis negotiation skills, suicide intervention, pertinent legal issues, first responder stress, and communication techniques used in the de-escalation of crisis situations.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
Contra Costa Sheriff's Dept	0	68	37	62	28	195
Total	0	68	37	62	28	195

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: **CRISIS INTERVENTION UPDATE – 20800**

A training update for crisis intervention team members on new techniques in crisis intervention for mentally distraught individuals. Law enforcement officers, probation personnel, and emergency dispatchers learn the skills and knowledge to recognize individuals with mental illness, identify potential disorders, and minimize escalations in contacts with the mentally ill. Topics include community programs for mental health, the role of mental health professionals and facilities, including legal pertinent issues. This course is periodically updated with current diagnosis information, medication information, and communication techniques.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	Total
Napa Valley College	0	110	67	0	0	177
Oakland Police Dept	0	0	0	418	34	452
Santa Clara Co Sheriff's Dept	0	65	32	0	0	97
Stockton Police Dept	0	0	0	69	15	84
Total	0	175	99	487	49	810

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: MANAGING/RESOLVING CRISIS - 20770

Law enforcement officers and public safety dispatchers learn to identify signs and symptoms of mental illness and recognize various developmental disabilities. Curriculum includes techniques for de-escalation of potentially violent situations and crisis intervention skills. A comprehensive overview of available community services is provided.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	Total
San Jose Police Dept	29	0	91	49	31	200
Total	29	0	91	49	31	200

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: VETERANS/LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERACTION - 22328

This course addresses potential law enforcement issues arising from an anticipated influx of returning war veterans. Topics include commonly shared attitudes, values and goals among law enforcement and veterans. The course identifies potential resources available for veterans and provides law enforcement with tools for interaction with combat veterans. The course introduces common mental health presentations and teaches strategies that officers may use in such encounters.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	Total
Campbell Police Dept	0	0	65	48	0	113
South Bay Regional Training	0	0	0	107	46	153
Total	0	0	65	155	46	266

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES & MENTAL ILLNESSES/OFFICER RESPONSE – 23293

This course provides necessary information for law enforcement officers who respond to incidents involving mentally ill and developmentally disabled persons. Course topics include community resources as well as the use of multi-agency crisis intervention teams. Students learn behavioral characteristics of mental illnesses and techniques for intervention and de-escalation of violent situations.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
San Bernardino Sheriff's Dept	30	12	121	36	0	199
South Bay Regional Training	52	80	70	46	37	285
Ventura Co Sheriff's Dept	40	33	60	40	0	173
Total	122	125	251	122	37	657

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH-PERT – 20906

This course provides an introduction to mental health issues and crisis intervention. Students learn about neurological disorders and techniques for crisis intervention and de-escalation of violent situations.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
San Diego Police Dept	0	0	0	78	89	167
Total	0	0	0	78	89	167

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Training Course: INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH -MEU/SMART – 20902

New MEU/SMART employees are trained to assess whether detainees fall under the provisions of W&I Code 5150, complete the MEU intake forms, and provide support to officers in the field who contact persons affected by mental illnesses.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
Los Angeles Police Dept	80	85	115	141	139	560
Total	80	850	115	141	139	560

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

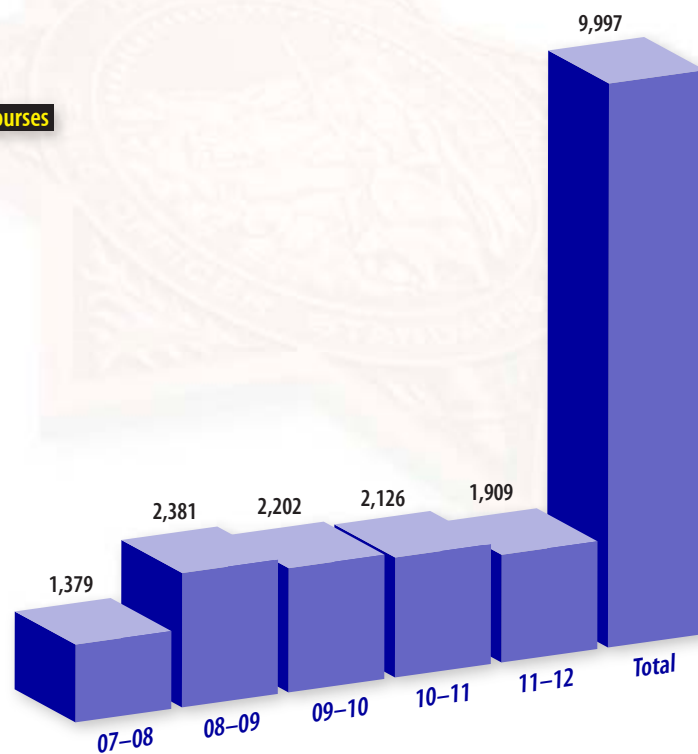
Training Course: MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS REFRESHER – 20901

A training update for police officers and sergeants on skills, judgement, competence and safety with respect to incidents involving persons with mental illnesses. Updated information on crisis intervention techniques is included.

Course Attendees per Year

Training Presenter	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11	11–12	Total
Fresno Police Dept	0	593	202	0	0	795
Total	0	593	202	0	0	795

Notes: Course is open to all participating POST agencies. Year spans are fiscal years.

Total For All Courses

Note: The report includes all training rosters submitted as of June, 2012. Year spans are fiscal years.

NEW POST TRAINING DVD – PTSD AND TBI

POST formed a workgroup comprised of subject matter experts that included staff from the California Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Veterans Administration, UC San Francisco General Hospital Department of Neurology, appropriate community, local and state organizations, military veterans and peace officers that have expertise in the area of PTSD and TBI. Beginning in June 2011, the workgroup met to review existing law enforcement training courses that currently incorporate information about PTSD and TBI in the curriculum, including Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Based on the review, workgroup members determined additional training would be beneficial to law enforcement and commenced development of the training curriculum.

The project later transitioned to development of a DVD training course to facilitate more widespread distribution to California law enforcement agencies. The new POST training DVD, PTSD and TBI, will be distributed to all California law enforcement agencies in June, 2012.

