

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
Process for Certification and Recertification of School Resource Officers

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General Terms and Conditions of School Resource Officer Training Certification

The purpose of this document is to provide clarification of the requirements referenced in §§ [9.1.102](#) and [9.1-114.1](#) of the *Code of Virginia* for the certification and recertification of school resource officers (SROs).

Every full-time or part-time law enforcement officer employed as an SRO after July 1, 2020, shall comply with the compulsory minimum training standards for SROs established by the Criminal Justice Services Board (Board) within a period of time fixed by the Board. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (the Department) shall ensure that such required training is available throughout the Commonwealth.

The Department, under the direction of the Board, shall establish compulsory minimum training standards for certification and recertification of law enforcement officers serving as SROs. Such training shall be specific to the role and responsibility of a law enforcement officer working with students in a school environment.

A "school resource officer" (SRO) means a certified law enforcement officer hired by the local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools. In addition, SROs must have at least 2 years of experience as a certified law enforcement officer as defined in [§9.1.101](#) of the *Code of Virginia* and be currently assigned and serving in a Virginia public school as an SRO.

The Department will establish the curriculum and training standards for compulsory minimum training standards in accordance with legislation and best practices from the field and may make periodic updates as needed.

Basic Compulsory Minimum Training Requirements

The SRO initial certification training course shall be a total of 40 hours using the DCJS Curriculum. Of the 40 hours, 32 hours will be conducted in-person and the remaining 8 hours will be satisfied through the DCJS learning management system (LMS) and consist of online content specifically approved by the DCJS for SRO initial certification requirements. A DCJS certified law enforcement academy is allowed to provide the 32 hours of in-person training provided that the academy uses the approved DCJS curriculum. .

The SRO initial certification training course must address each of the following subjects as required by [§9.1-114.1](#) and pursuant to [§9.1-102](#). Such training shall be specific to the role and responsibility of a law enforcement officer working with students in a school environment and shall include:

- relevant state and federal laws;
- school and personal liability issues;
- security awareness in the school environment;
- mediation and conflict resolution, including de-escalation techniques;
- disaster and emergency response;
- awareness of systemic and individual racism, cultural diversity, and implicit bias;
- working with students with disabilities, mental health needs, substance use disorders, or past traumatic experiences; and
- student behavioral dynamics, including current child and adolescent development and brain research;

Additional topics may be required addressing emerging trends or best practices as determined by the Department.

Certification Process

All certified law enforcement officers who have completed initial SRO training prior to December 31, 2023 shall be initially certified as of January 1, 2024 with no additional requirements for initial certification and shall need to meet recertification requirements by December 31, 2025.

The employing agency must enter the SRO assignment date in the Department's electronic records management system. This shall be the date the certified law enforcement officer is assigned as an SRO. Prior to assignment as an SRO and enrollment in the SRO initial certification training course, an officer must be certified as a law enforcement officer by the Department.

Once assigned, the SRO shall complete the SRO initial certification training course provided by the Department (or other certified law enforcement academy within the Commonwealth) within 60 days of working in a school as an SRO.

Agencies may request a training extension for the completion of the SRO initial certification training course if no course is offered within the 60 days, if the distance to the only available session exceeds 60 miles, or for other reasons approved by the Department. An agency may also request a waiver for the minimum experience requirement provided the officer was assigned as an SRO after July 1, 2020, but before this standard became effective.

All SRO certifications become effective upon completion of all compulsory minimum training standards.. The Department is the final approval authority for all SRO certifications.

All SRO certifications become null and void when the certified SRO is no longer employed by the agency that requested the certification. The certification may, with the review and approval of the Department, be reinstated upon employment with a new criminal justice agency upon request of the new employing agency.

Law enforcement officers who fail to complete initial or renewal certification training within the prescribed time frame shall not be eligible to serve as an SRO until such time as the

requirements have been met and approved by the Department. The Department shall notify the law enforcement officer and the chief or sheriff of the agency after the certification becomes null and void, or after the law enforcement officer fails to complete the initial certification training within the prescribed time.

Recertification Process

All certified SROs must recertify by December 31 of the second calendar year following satisfactory completion of the entry-level compulsory minimum training standards and must complete compulsory in-service training by December 31 of every other calendar year thereafter. Recertification training must be completed before the SRO certification expires. If the certification has expired, see below for the SRO reinstatement process.

In-service training approved through the Department shall be completed and must include a minimum of 16 hours of school safety-related training and at least 2 hours of relevant legal updates. These training hours may count toward both SRO recertification and general law enforcement recertification.

SROs will be recertified based upon the electronic submission of the documentation of training completion in accordance with the requirements herein.

SRO recertification becomes effective when entered the Department's electronic records management system and the individual is listed as a certified SRO.

School Resource Officer Recertification Training Extensions

SROs may receive a recertification training extension for demonstrated good cause for a maximum of 90 days upon the submission and approval of a Training Extension Form to the Department's Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety at SRO@dcjs.virginia.gov.

Extensions shall be submitted to the Department prior to the SRO certification expiration date.

Any SRO certification that has expired without the approval of a training extension must be handled as an SRO reinstatement.

School Resource Officer Reinstatement

Employment: SRO certification becomes null and void when the certified SRO is no longer employed by the agency that requested the certification.

Upon reemployment with a Virginia law enforcement agency, the agency may request the SRO certification be reinstated by submitting an SRO reinstatement form with the agency administrator's (or their designee's) signature to the Department for approval.

Expiration: When the SRO fails to complete the SRO recertification process within the required guidelines (two years following the initial certification and every two years thereafter), the SRO certification becomes null and void until reinstatement.

If the SRO's certification has expired for less than 12 months, the agency may request the SRO certification be reinstated by submitting an SRO reinstatement form with the agency administrator's (or their designee) signature to the Department for approval.

The expired SRO must complete an SRO recertification course.

Any SRO certification that expired for more than 12 months shall not be eligible for reinstatement under this section and the SRO must complete the SRO initial certification process.