

Each year from 2011 to 2013, an average of 45,000 entry-level officer recruits entered basic training programs at 664 state and local law enforcement training academies. Eighty-six percent of the recruits successfully completed their training, which was the same completion rate observed for the 57,000 recruits who entered programs in 2005.

Basic training models

The programs used training models that ranged on a continuum from completely stress-based to completely nonstress. Stress-based training was similar to military training, and it usually involved intense physical demands and psychological pressure. The nonstress model emphasized academics in addition to physical training and had a more relaxed, supportive relationship between instructors and trainees.

Nearly half (48%) of recruits were trained by academies that were more stress than nonstress orientated. About a fifth (18%) of recruits were trained by academies that maintained a more nonstress than stress environment. A third of recruits (33%) were trained at academies that balanced the two approaches.

About the academies

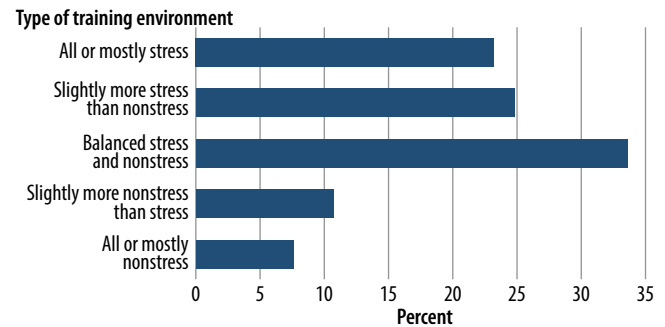
Almost half of training academies were based at an educational institution. This included 33% at 2-year colleges, 7% at 4-year colleges or universities, and 7% at technical schools. Academies were also operated by municipal police departments (20%), sheriffs' offices (10%), state police or highway patrol agencies (6%), and State Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) agencies (5%).

Excluding any required field training, the length of a basic law enforcement training program was about 840 hours, or 21 weeks. Academies operated by agencies with special jurisdictions, such as parks or transportation systems, had the longest programs (averaging 1,075 hours), followed by county police academies (1,029 hours). Academies operated by POST agencies (650 hours), technical schools (703 hours), and sheriffs' offices (706 hours) had the shortest training programs, on average.

Types of training

Academies required recruits to spend the most training time (more than 200 hours) on operations. The topics covered included patrol procedures (52 hours), investigations

Distribution of recruits in basic training programs in state and local law enforcement training academies, by type of training environment, 2011–13



Note: See appendix table 16 for standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013.

(42 hours), emergency vehicle operations (38 hours), and report writing (25 hours). Recruits were required to spend an average of 168 hours of training on weapons, defensive tactics, the use of force, and nonlethal weapons.

Mock scenarios were used in reality-based training to encourage recruits to practice critical decision making, execute standard operating procedures, and employ potentially life-saving tactics under realistic conditions. Almost all (99%) recruits received reality-based use-of-force training, and 74% of recruits received this type of training on the use of nonlethal weapons. Additionally, 9 in 10 recruits received training on firearm use at night, in reduced light, or under simulated stressful conditions.

Community policing

Community policing was also an important component of basic law enforcement training. In 2013, 97% of academies provided training in this area, up from the 92% in 2006. In 2013, recruits were required to complete an average of more than 40 hours of this training. Additionally, a majority of recruits were trained on how to identify community problems (77%), the history of community-oriented policing (75%), interacting with youth (62%), using problem-solving models (61%), determining the environmental causes of crime (57%), and prioritizing crime and disorder problems (51%). More than 9 in 10 training programs addressed social issues, such as domestic violence (an average of 13 hours per recruit) and mental illness (10 hours).

The full report (*State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013*, NCJ 249784), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.

