

STATE OF ALABAMA


PEACE OFFICERS' STANDARDS AND TRAINING COMMISSION



CHIEF R. ALAN BENEFIELD
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

TO: All law enforcement agency heads

FROM: 
Chief R. Alan Benefield, Executive Secretary

DATE: May 12, 2020

RE: Law Enforcement Academy operations during the COVID-19 State of Emergency

The Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission (Commission) has begun the processes necessary to facilitate the reopening of regional academies. The Commission is working to resume classes which were in session and were suspended when the COVID-19 pandemic became a declared State of Emergency for both the State of Alabama and our Nation. The Commission is also working to start all academy classes which were previously scheduled but were canceled/postponed due to the State of Emergency and Public Health Order. Academy sessions at the APOSTC Law Enforcement Academy-Tuscaloosa, the Alabama Police Academy (APA) in Selma, and the Northeast Alabama Law Enforcement Academy (NEALEA) at Jacksonville State University (JSU-Anniston) are now scheduled to begin June 1, 2020.

Due to current public health requirements, all individuals are required to remain six feet apart from other individuals. Therefore, in order to satisfy this requirement, it is necessary that student class numbers be reduced to the classroom space available at the respective academies. This number varies depending on the location. As an example, in the past NEALEA classrooms could accommodate slightly more than 100 students/recruits and students/recruits were billeted three per dorm room. Today, due to the requirements of the COVID-19 Public Health Orders, with students required to be spaced at least six feet apart in the classroom, the academy can accommodate only 48 students/recruits **and** students/recruits will be billeted only one person per dorm room. Thereby tripling the housing expenses!

At its meeting of May 7, 2020, the Commission voted to set tuition at \$1,000 for recruits attending the Basic (520-hour) academy class. This tuition rate is effective June 1, 2020. Upon graduation and the recruit receiving his/her APOSTC Certification, the Commission **WILL** continue to reimburse the academies \$500 with the employing agency being responsible for \$500, payable to the Academy upon invoice. Should the recruit not complete the academy class and/or not

receive Certification for ANY reason, the employing agency is responsible for the entire \$1,000 tuition, payable to the Academy upon invoice.

Also, effective June 1, 2020, tuition for each recruit attending the Lateral/Refresher (95-Hour) class will be \$1,250. Should the recruit not complete the academy class and/or not receive Certification for ANY reason, the employing agency is responsible for the entire \$1,250 tuition, payable to the Academy upon invoice. Please note that the tuition increase is made necessary due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity of increased costs relating to personal protection equipment (PPE) as well as additional cleaning and sanitizing procedures for recruits, staff, and the training facilities. The Commission will consider returning the tuition to the pre-pandemic level once these procedures are relaxed.

And lastly, due to extreme decreases in Court Cost collections caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission is forced to suspend, effective June 1, 2020, the \$1,300 food and lodging reimbursement program for law enforcement agencies whose recruits attend a regional law enforcement academy (520-hour class). Court Cost revenue is the funding source for the reimbursement program. Court Cost collections for the Commission's Fund were down 26% before the COVID-19 pandemic and are down 39% for April 2020 compared to April 2019. Sadly, this income is expected to further decline over the next several months. Hopefully, the Fund will recover once the Courts return to full operation. Once income into the fund improves, the Commission will address reinstating this very valuable program.

As you are well aware, law enforcement, including the training/certification of our officers, has become more challenging as a result of COVID-19 and the public health orders the pandemic brings to us. Please be assured the Commission is working relentlessly to provide academy classes to meet everyone's training and certification needs in a manner that will be safe for the students and staff.