

FIELD TRAINING SUMMARY FOR 2008

Our department maintains a Field Training Unit as part of our Patrol Division. It is the responsibility of this unit to conduct pre-employment background investigations on police officer candidates and to provide the initial training to our new police officers.

Each finalist for employment as a Moorhead Police Officer is subject to a thorough background investigation. Our field training officers (FTOs) spend approximately fifty hours conducting each background investigation. Much of this investigation is done in person and thus it requires travel to many locations. At the conclusion of this investigation a report is completed. Our Police Civil Service Commission then reviews these reports and the commission determines if the candidate passed this investigation. In 2008, our field training officers conducted background investigations during June, July and August. This was part of a hiring cycle for new police officers that started their employment in September.

Our field training unit provides the initial training to each new Moorhead police officer. The new officer's first two weeks of employment are spent attending our two week new officer academy. This academy is taught by members of our department and its topics include:

- Use of force
- Firearms training and qualification (handgun, shotgun & carbine)
- Defensive tactics (hand to hand, handcuffing, baton, OC Spray, & Taser)
- Report writing
- Patrol procedures
- Building searches
- High risk traffic stops
- Community policing
- Department rules and regulations
- Crime scene processing
- Computers
- DWI enforcement

One purpose of our academy is to train our new officers in the skills that are required before they can start working as a Moorhead Police Officer. These required skills are use of force related. Our academy also provides an introduction to many of the skills that they will need to master before they graduate from our formal field training program. These skills include topics like report writing and learning our various computer systems. Our academy is taught in a relaxed atmosphere and is not taught in a high stress environment.

After their two week academy new police officers are assigned to our formal field training program. We use the Sokolove method of field training. This training program is generally fifteen work weeks in length. It can be modified to be slightly shorter or longer in length to meet the training needs of individual new police officers. During this program new police officers are always working with a field training officer. They are assigned to each officer for generally four work weeks. Our new police officers' performance is evaluated daily. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide constructive feedback to increase the new officer's learning. Our field training program also includes a comprehensive training manual. Each week our new officers are taught the topics that are required for them to succeed as a Moorhead Police Officer. This year we also started having each new officer work one week with our investigators, as part of their field training.

During this year our unit trained four new officers that were hired in January 2008 and five new officers that were hired in September 2008. The officers who were hired in January graduated from their field training in early June and our officers that were hired in September are scheduled to graduate in March 2009.

Our field training officers are selected from the members of our Patrol Division. When we have an opening for a field training officer we post the opening and any interested officers apply for this assignment. They are appointed by the chief of police after he considers input from their supervisors, our existing field training officers and our community policing coordinator. New field training officers attend a forty hour long course which certifies them as field training officers.

Officers Nick Leinen, Nicole Reno, Katie Scholla, and Josh Schroeder, were selected this year to become field training officers.

The following officers were active field training officers during 2008;

- Sergeant Steve Larsen
- Officer Kim Bloch
- Officer Adam Breth
- Officer Scott Kostohryz
- Officer Shawn Griego
- Officer Val Kellen
- Officer Nick Leinen
- Officer Robb Matheson
- Officer Nicole Reno
- Officer Katie Scholla
- Officer Josh Schroeder
- Officer Clint Stephenson
- Officer Joel Voxland

Our field training unit was supervised this year by Lieutenant Jim Nielsen. Our pre-employment background investigations were supervised by Lieutenant Brad Penas.