



Frequently Asked Questions about the EOT Process

Q: What is Equivalency of Training (EOT)?

A: Equivalency Of Training is a program that allows qualified persons to follow an accelerated path to certification as a Law Enforcement, Correctional Officer, or Correctional Probation Officer in Florida. It is based on the assumption that it is wasteful of time and resources, both for qualified applicants and our taxpayers, to needlessly repeat many parts of basic training. Once your qualifications are established, you are allowed to demonstrate proficiency in specific high-liability training areas and take the State Officer Certification Examination (SOCE), without having to first complete a full basic training academy.

Q: What are the qualifications that I must meet?

A: To be qualified, you must have completed training in specific required subjects and have been employed full-time for at least one full year (not counting time spent in an academy) as a law enforcement or correctional officer in another state, a federal agency or the military. Qualifying employment must not have ended more than 8-years prior to completing the EOT evaluation process. The time limit is measured from the separation date of the applicant's most recent qualifying full-time employment to the date a complete EOT application is made to a selection center or employing agency. "Complete application" means an application made on the required form that contains all information needed to process the evaluation. It must be legible, accurate and sworn before a notary public. It must include the required processing fee, supporting documents and a properly executed waiver form (CJSTC form 58).

Q: Are the Law Enforcement and Correctional certifications interchangeable in Florida?

A: No, each is a separate discipline for the purposes of certification. If you are currently a law enforcement officer in another state or federal system, you may be eligible to become a law enforcement officer in Florida through the EOT process. If you are a correctional officer, you may be eligible to become a correctional officer in Florida through the EOT process. The EOT process does not change your certification from one discipline to another. After you complete the EOT process and become certified in Florida as a law enforcement or correctional officer, you may then complete crossover-training to change from one discipline to another. For more information on the crossover training process, use the links on this site to contact the



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Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy or another certified training center in Florida.

Q: How does the EOT process work?

A: The EOT process has three parts:

(1) **EOT Evaluation** (Required). This part is done by a regional selection center, such as the Criminal Justice Selection Center (co-located at Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy), to establish your qualifications. This is the only step of the EOT process handled by our office.

(2) **Proficiency Demonstration** (Required). This part is done by a certified training center, such as the **Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy (PTLEA)**, to give you an opportunity to show a certified instructor that you are proficient in certain physical skills such as defensive tactics and weapons. You may choose a proficiency demonstration course that also includes an optional review that will help prepare you for the required written examination that is the final step of the EOT process. Our office does not conduct this training. You will need to contact the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy or another certified training center, using the information provided on the instructions which accompany the EOT Evaluation Application or the links on our web site.

(3) **State Officer Certification Examination (SOCE)** (Required). The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) administers this written examination on a regular schedule throughout the state. Our office does not administer this examination. The certified training center you choose for Proficiency Demonstration will schedule and arrange the SOCE for you.

Q: How do I get started?

A: You must submit the following to us: (1) a complete Equivalency Of Training (EOT) Evaluation Application; (2) a complete FDLE Form CJSTC 58 "Authority For Release Of Information" waiver allowing us access to your employment and training records; (3) supporting documents that help prove the training and employment qualifications upon which your equivalency claim is based and; (4) a non-refundable \$200 fee by check or money order (\$50 for inactive Florida-certified). We will use the waiver to access the records needed to verify your qualifying employment and training. While we always try to work with applicants and give them an opportunity to correct any problems, we cannot work on your evaluation until your application is



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complete. If the evaluation establishes that you are qualified, we will issue the basic recruit-training exemption you need to continue in the process. This exemption is usually referred to as a CJSTC-76 Form.

Q: What kind of supporting documents should I send with EOT application form?

A: While we must still verify employment and training by contacting the institutions in question, you must also supply us with documentation that supports your claim of eligibility for the EOT exemption. Examples of helpful documents:

- An officer training profile maintained by an employer, a state certification authority such as POST or CJSTC, a military profile from VMET or AKO Account, or other officer training profiles maintained by an authorized government agency.
- Your basic/recruit academy diploma and the summary outline of its basic/recruit training curriculum.
- A certificate or other credential issued to you by a state or federal certification authority that shows your compliance with law enforcement or correctional officer certification requirements in the state (or federal entity) upon which your EOT claim is based.
- Annual evaluations or reviews for the time you claim as qualifying employment on your EOT Application. These can help establish that your employment was as an officer with duties (such as bearing arms, making arrests, conducting investigations, enforcing traffic regulations, investigating traffic crashes, supervising inmates, etc.) that support your EOT claim. These can be particularly helpful in establishing whether or not a military police assignment included law enforcement duties.
- Training records related to the high liability training areas listed in the instructions that accompany the EOT Evaluation Application Form. These records may be certificates of attendance or excerpts from regular training records made by your employer or a training center.
- A letter from your commanding officer or agency chief which confirms the service as a law enforcement or correctional officer as claimed on your EOT Application.



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Examples of documents that are not usually helpful:

- College degrees or diplomas for education or training unrelated to basic recruit training.
- Certificates or diplomas for specialized courses such as K-9, SWAT, Fingerprint classification, or other areas unrelated to basic recruit training.

Q: How much time does the EOT qualification evaluation take?

A: You should allow about eight weeks for this step of the process. Some evaluations take less time, but we cannot predict how quickly employers or training institutions will respond to our verification requests.

Q: I want to attend a particular Proficiency Demonstration class or take the state examination on a certain date. Is there anything I can do to speed up the evaluation process?

A: Yes. Submit a complete application along with supporting documents, and respond in a timely manner to any request we make for additional information. You should also consider calling the employer(s) and/or training institution(s) used as the basis for your qualifications and ask them to reply quickly to our verification requests. This is much more helpful than calling us to ask why we have not yet received answers to our verification requests. Problem areas that often slow down an evaluation:

- An illegible, incomplete or ambiguous application form
- Incomplete or inaccurate addresses
- With large agencies or institutions, failure to provide the address of the specific office that handles verifications, causing inquiries to go astray in a large internal mail system.

Q: How can I avoid these errors?

A: Research. Remember, if you don't know or can't find the correct dates, course titles, names and addresses to support your own claim – it is doubtful that we will be able to complete your evaluation in a timely manner and make a convincing case that you are eligible for the program.



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Q: I don't want my employer to know that I am trying to get certified in Florida and may be leaving. Can you verify employment without contacting my employer?

A: No. We understand that some employers may not react pleasantly in such situations, but we need a reliable verification of your qualifications. This requires the verification to be both explicit and from a proper authority.

Q: Will my service as a reserve or part-time officer meet the employment qualification?

A: No. To qualify, employment must have been on a full-time, paid basis. For law enforcement officers it must also have been in a "sworn" position authorized to bear arms and make arrests. Reserve, part-time, auxiliary or seasonal employment does not qualify, even if you worked full time hours.

Q: My law enforcement or corrections employment was as a military police officer. Does this qualify?

A: Maybe. Your duty assignment during the qualifying period must have been devoted full time to the discipline (law enforcement or corrections) for which you are making an EOT application. For instance, if you are trying to qualify based on service as a military police officer, we must be able to verify that you were assigned full time to discharging law enforcement duties (such as answering calls for law enforcement service, conducting criminal investigations, making arrests, investigating accidents, conducting traffic enforcement, etc.). Duties related to security, or working in a vessel-boarding or inspection team will not establish EOT qualification.

Q: I accumulated a full year of full-time employment, but it was with two different employers. Does this meet the employment qualification?

A: Probably - so long as (1) you were classified as a full-time employee by each of those employers and; (2) you accumulated a full year of full-time employment within an eighteen-month period and; (3) no more than two employers can be used to satisfy this EOT requirement. Also, to be considered full-time employment, the employment periods cannot overlap – in other words you cannot use two employments to satisfy the EOT requirement if you were simultaneously working for two different employers. The most recent of the qualifying employment periods that you are adding together to satisfy the EOT requirement must not have ended more than 8-years prior to the submission of your complete EOT application.



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Q: Does time spent in a police academy on a paid employment basis count toward the EOT employment requirement?

A: No. Time spent in basic recruit training (police or corrections academy) does not count. The one-year employment requirement must be satisfied using time serving as an officer, not as a cadet.

Q: Once the evaluation has established my qualifications, what comes next?

A: We will issue the exemption from basic recruit training. This will be issued directly to you as a Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) Form 76. You will need that form to continue in the process. You will be required to acknowledge receipt of the 76 Form in writing within thirty (30) days or it will not be valid. You will have one year from the date of receipt to complete a Proficiency Demonstration course AND pass the State Officer Certification Examination (SOCE).

Q: What happens if I do not provide an acknowledgment of the receipt for the 76 Form?

A: The exemption from the basic recruit training will not be validated and your application will expire.

Q: What happens if I do not complete the Proficiency Demonstration and pass the SOCE examination within one year after receiving the 76 Form?

A: You will have to attend a full basic recruit academy in order to become certified in Florida.

Q: How do I "demonstrate proficiency" in the high-liability subject areas?

A: A Florida state certified instructor must observe you demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities required in the following subject areas:

For Law Enforcement Officers: Firearms Performance Evaluation, First Aid for Criminal Justice Officers, Defensive Tactics Performance Evaluation, and Vehicle Operations Performance Evaluation.

For Correctional Officers (and Probation Officers): Firearms Performance Evaluation, First Aid for Criminal Justice Officers, Defensive Tactics Performance Evaluation.



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This is normally done at a certified training institution and will require you to attend a class that provides a safe and trustworthy means of demonstration. Such classes usually take one week for the Proficiency Demonstration and a second week for the optional SOCE review material. Tuition prices reflect the use of school provided equipment such as firearms and vehicles, the use of firearms ranges and driving facilities, and substantial labor costs to ensure a safe ratio of specialized instructors to students. Upon completion of the course, the institution will provide you with documentation that you have demonstrated the required proficiency on a CJSTC Form 76-A. Remember, you must first have your CJSTC Form 76 (exemption) in hand to prove your eligibility to participate in the Proficiency Demonstration training course.

To learn more about this step in the process or schedule a course, we recommend that you use the link on our site for the following training center or contact them at:

Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy (PTLEA)
75 College Drive, Suite 203
Havana, FL 32333
Telephone: 850-201-7000

Q: You mentioned an optional review course for the state written examination (SOCE). Why do you recommend this course?

A: While the review is optional, we believe most people will find it difficult to do well on the examination without having an opportunity to first review this material. Remember, the examination is the same one given to cadets who have just graduated from a full Curriculum Maintenance System (CMS) police academy using scenario based training techniques over approximately seventeen weeks of full time instruction. While your former training and experience will be helpful in most topics, some of the nomenclature and concepts may be presented in ways that are new to you. This can affect your performance on the written SOCE.

The **Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy (PTLEA)** mentioned elsewhere in this FAQ offers the review course and can provide you with details or answer your questions concerning the training and examination.

Q: How do I arrange to take the State Officer Certification Examination (SOCE)?



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A: The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) administers the examination on a regular basis throughout the state of Florida. The training center you use for the Proficiency Demonstration will help you schedule an SOCE. You can also check the FDLE web site, or contact the **Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy** mentioned above. Remember, you must first have your CJSTC Form 76 (Exemption) and CJSTC Form 76-A (Proficiency Demonstration) in hand to prove your eligibility to take the written examination.

Q: I have other questions about this process. Where should I go for answers?

A: For questions on the:

EOT Evaluation of your qualifications, the best first step is to read the "Equivalency Of Training (EOT) Application" and the instructions that accompany it. (You may download it from this site.) It contains much more information than it is practical to give orally, so please read it before you call us. If you have questions after you read it, call or visit us during normal business hours. We do have e-mail, but have found that it is usually an inefficient means of answering EOT questions. (We often need to ask you a few questions first, to make sure we know what information you are seeking - so we can avoid confusing you further.) In any case, we'll be happy to help you. Answering your questions is actually a large part of what we do. All we ask is that you read the material first, so we can help you more efficiently.

Proficiency Demonstration and **SOCE Examination Review**. Contact the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy mentioned above. Their web site also has other information you might find helpful. There is a link on our site that will take you to the PTLEA site. You may also direct your training questions to any other certified Florida training center. FDLE keeps a current list on their web site.

State Officer Certification Examination (SOCE): Contact PTLEA or visit the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) web site using the link on our site.

Q: What else do you think I need to know?

A: Remember that the EOT process only establishes your training and employment qualifications to be a law enforcement or correctional officer. There are other requirements related to criminal history, the character of



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military discharge, moral character, etc. that must be established by a thorough background investigation before a person can be appointed as an officer. You may learn more about these standards by reading about the Criminal Justice Selection Center process elsewhere on this site. We hope that you will consider applying for the Criminal Justice Selection Center process and seek employment with the agencies we serve in Tallahassee and the surrounding region.