

June 5, 2018



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FIRE CHIEF

May 14, 2018

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 18-051

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION INVESTIGATOR TRAINING

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

As directed by the Board of Fire Commissioners, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) is providing a report on the training needs of the Professional Standards Division (PSD), as well as the progress of Investigator training and training curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file.

DISCUSSION

PSD Investigator Staff Training

Members hired as Fire Special Investigators in the PSD hail from a variety of employment backgrounds. Prior to their employment with the Department, some were employed as investigators or law enforcement members with the State Bar of California, the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, the Housing Department and the Controller's Office. They possess varying degrees of expertise and knowledge and have performed duties very similar to those required of the investigators assigned to PSD.

The Department has been fortunate to have had the ability to attract candidates with relevant and diverse investigative backgrounds and expertise. However, due to the Department's unique organizational structure, its strong sworn labor presence, challenging work environments, and investigative processes, those qualifications do not immediately translate into an effective investigator.

Furthermore, although the Department employs highly skilled civilian investigators, PSD commanders have recognized that the investigative skills set of sworn members assigned to PSD as investigators/advocates can significantly differ.

Since 2008, PSD commanders have budgeted for training in the event a civilian or sworn investigator demonstrates or reveals a lack of a particular skill or knowledge, or requires strengthening in a specific area. The identification of investigator training needs can occur by the individual investigator, or by the PSD commanders assigned the task of evaluating the investigative process or the investigator's work product. Even with the prospect of a well-trained investigator, PSD commanders view training in the area of investigations as continuing education.

Because of the Department's unique characteristics and diversity in the complaints it investigates, PSD's investigative staff must develop a general knowledge of various City standards, practices, policies and expectations, as well as those specific to the Department. To assist with this development, the completion of the following training could be considered mandatory for the command and investigative staff of PSD:

- Introduction to internal affairs investigations
- Proper interviewing and interrogation techniques
- Investigative report writing basics
- General EEO overview and legal updates
- Advocacy training for the purposes of Boards of Rights and civil service appeals
- Workplace Harassment and Abusive Conduct Prevention (supervisory and non-supervisory versions, located in Cornerstone)
- Supervisor Curriculum (located in Cornerstone)
- Supervisory Skills (located in Cornerstone)
- Conflict Management – Management Coach Series (located in Cornerstone)
- Performance Management - Management Coach Series (located in Cornerstone)
- Personal Issues - Management Coach Series (located in Cornerstone)

The following list includes the vendors, agencies and firms PSD has employed from 2008 to 2017 for the purpose of investigator development. Though extensive, the Department is constantly challenged by the lack of opportunities specifically relating to administrative functions and topics in the fire service.

- AELE Law Enforcement Legal Center (Public Safety Discipline and Internal Investigations)
- Association of Workplace Investigators (formerly known as California Association of Workplace Investigators; training on investigation basics)
- Burstein and Prihar Advocacy Training (Related to Board of Rights and civil service appeal proceedings)
- Cal State Long Beach – Center for Criminal Justice (Internal Affairs training)
- Castle Publications, Ltd. (EEO training)
- California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (EEO training)

- Employment Roundtable of Southern California (formerly Southern California Employment Round Table – primarily EEO issues)
- Fire Service Legal Training Institute, Inc. (Management of disciplinary issues in the fire service)
- John E. Reid and Associates (Interrogation and questioning techniques and training)
- Labor Arbitration Institute
- Liebert, Cassidy, Whitmore (Legal updates)
- Los Angeles Police Department (Internal Affairs training)
- Office of the City Attorney (Workers' Compensation Fraud)
- Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County (Various topics)
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEO training)

In the upcoming months, the following number of PSD investigative staff is on track to complete training with the listed vendor or agency:

Vendor/Agency	Topic/Focus	Total PSD Members Attending
Burstein and Prihar Advocacy Training	Preparing for and presenting before Boards of Rights and civil service appeal proceedings	4
Cal State Long Beach – Center for Criminal Justice	Internal Affairs Seminar	3
John E. Reid and Associates	Investigative Interviewing and Positive Persuasion	4

PSD Field Investigator Training

PSD has recognized that in order to ensure that investigations assigned to field members are thorough, complete and timely, PSD started conducting ongoing training to field members as of January of 2018. The training is presented by the PSD embedded investigators throughout the Department's geographic bureaus.

The PSD Field Training consists of three general areas:

- CTS (Complaint Tracking System) Operation
- Investigative Processes
- EEO Policy and Procedures

This training is presented as one-on-one instruction with the assigned field investigator and captured through the Department's Learning Management System Target Solutions.

As PSD has become aware that field investigators face challenges during the investigation process mainly stemming from unfamiliarity in the investigative processes,

PSD embedded investigators perform routine inspections of the investigations, ensuring that the every investigation meets all Department expectations as well as regulatory requirements.

To date, PSD embedded Investigators have conducted over 500 hours of training with field members.

CONCLUSION

The Department is committed to having PSD staffed with a well-trained and educated investigative workforce. To that end, the Department is constantly seeking to further educate and train, as well as seek out best practices to ensure that PSD's investigative staff work is in compliance with all current and applicable laws, ordinances and industry changes.

Board report prepared by Stephen L. Gutierrez, Assistant Chief, Professional Standards Division.