

 Office of Mental Health Official Policy Manual	Date issued 7/10/2026	Page 1 of 3	Section # A-3004
	Section: Administration		
	Directive: Safety Officer Training		
	Policy Owner: Director, Administrative Support Services Group		

Safety Officer Training

Pursuant to section 7.25(a) of the Mental Hygiene Law, Peace Officers are designated as special police and are therefore granted peace officer powers as prescribed in section 2.20 of the Criminal Procedure Law.

A. Relevant Law and Standards

Mental Hygiene Law 7.25(a)

Criminal Procedure Law 2.30

Penal Law 35

As a result of the Peace Officer designation, all Officers must fulfill these training requirements:

B. New Officer Traineeship

All newly appointed Safety and Security Officers will participate in a traineeship that incorporates OMH policies, facility policies/requirements, and the Safety Officer Training Academy (SOTA). It is designed to achieve full compliance with the provisions of Section 2.30 of the NYS Criminal Procedure Law.

The new traineeship program consists of:

- A facility training program (on-the-job-training) is designed to train new Officers in facility policy and procedure, as well as training in topics such as First Aid, CPR, Right-to-Know, Emergency Management, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Computer Security, and clinical-related training, including Preventing and Managing Crisis Situations (PMCS), Therapeutic Relationships and Universal Safety Training (TRUST), and Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!).
- Orientation to all three shifts within the Safety and Security Department.
- This initial period is utilized for orientation and evaluation. The timeframe for this segment is usually from 8-10 weeks.
- The trainee is **not** DCJS-certified and shall **not** carry a baton or pepper spray, wear a body armor vest, or be subject to potentially dangerous situations in which use-of-force would be necessary by a Certified Officer.

Initial DCJS Training – Safety Officer Training Academy:

Officers must receive SOTA training within 12 months of their appointment that meets or exceeds the minimum Division of Criminal Justice Services requirement. OMH provides the initial training through an academy held 2x per year, typically in the spring and fall.

Academy is 7 weeks in duration, which includes 6 weeks of DCJS required topics and 1 week of agency-specific training.

Certificates issued at the conclusion of SOTA:

- SOTA certificate
- Lawful Use of Force/Defensive Tactics Article 35
- Hazardous Materials Awareness / Right-to-Know
- Fire Science and Fire Safety
- Family Care Inspection
- Naloxone
- Fundamentals of Crisis Intervention Skills for Law Enforcement
- Aerosol Subject Restraint (ASR)

C. Safety Department Annual In-Service Training

All Officers, regardless of when they were hired, must attend an annual General Topics recertification training which includes Penal Law 35 – Use of Force, Defensive Tactics and Principles of Control – Impact Weapon, annual ASR refresher, Use of Handcuffs, and Transport Restraints. The annual requirement is met through an OMH developed curriculum and is completed over 8 hours. The training is conducted at the facility by OMH certified instructors.

All student sign-in sheets for DCJS annual training will be completed on DCJS sign-in sheets and electronically sent to the Administrative Support Services Group (ASSG) - Environmental Health and Safety for reporting to DCJS. A copy of this form can be obtained from ASSG.

D. General Topics and Defensive Tactics Instructor Opportunities

All facilities should have at least one and are encouraged to have two DCJS-certified trainers in General Topics (GT), Defensive Tactics (DT), and ASR in order to complete the DCJS-mandated annual in-service training requirements. OMH also relies on this select group of Officers to assist with the administration of the SOTA. ASSG works to provide Instructor Development Courses (IDC) in both GT and DT to further develop a robust pool of qualified instructors.

ASSG requests that all Officers, when possible and approved by the Chief and Facility Administration, consider participating in the OMH Safety Officer Training Program by becoming an instructor. This helps each facility meet the annual refresher training requirements and also helps OMH with conducting the SOTA.

Instructor Development Course:

IDC – General Topics:

ASSG will administer an IDC that provides General Topics (GT) instruction. This is a 2-week class with a heavy emphasis on adult learning principles, curriculum development, public speaking, and presentation skills. This is the first of a two-part requirement to become a fully certified OMH Safety Officer Instructor.

IDC – Defensive Tactics:

ASSG will administer an IDC that provides Defensive Tactics (DT) instruction, as needed. Prior to attending a DT course, an Officer must have completed the IDC–GT course. This two-week DT class focuses on instructing DCJS-approved Defensive and Recovery Tactics for Officers. The curriculum is physically demanding and requires intense physical participation to master techniques.

IDC – Aerosol Subject Restraint Instructor Course:

ASSG will administer an IDC that provides ASR instruction. The officer must have completed the IDC General Topics course. This 16 hours 2-Day course prepares law enforcement to train others on the use, policy, and safety of chemical sprays.

Master Trainer:

This is an opportunity for certified Instructors to teach modules at IDCs and acquire a DCJS-Master Trainer certification. This allows OMH to host IDC classes in the future, so OMH maintains a steady cadre of quality instructors. If an Officer has completed both GT and DT training and wishes to further pursue certification as a Master Instructor, they should speak with their Chief of Safety who can begin to coordinate the training path to achieve the Master Instructor level.

Special note:

Any OMH Safety Officer can attend a locally held, DCJS-sanctioned training event to gain certifications in addition to OMH-hosted trainer development classes. Proper certificates of completion should be forwarded to ASSG for maintaining accurate records of the DCJS-certified trainers throughout the State. Approval from the Facility Chief Safety Officer must be given in order for the Officer to attend.