

WEST VIRGINIA

Site address for the Law Enforcement Professional Standards (LEPS) Subcommittee (POST body) of the West Virginia Division of Justice and Community Services (DJCS) website <http://www.djcs.wv.gov/law-enforcement-professional-standards/Pages/default.aspx>

Site address for equivalent certification (reciprocity) rule/requirements (§149-2-14) <http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=25607&Format=PDF>

Reciprocity: **Yes**

Basic Academy: 825 hours

Conditions: Applicants for certification as law enforcement officers in the State of West Virginia under the equivalent certification provision shall:

- Have completed a Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission approved basic entry-level training program or equivalent Federal law enforcement training;
- Have been certified as a law enforcement officer in the state or by the Federal agency where basic entry-level training was completed and that such certification remains in good standing. In states where there are different levels of law enforcement certification, the officer must hold the highest level certification;
- Have never been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or of a sufficient number of misdemeanors as to establish a general disregard for the law;
- Have made application for certification within ninety (90) calendar days of their date of employment with a West Virginia Law Enforcement agency in accord with the equivalent training provision of the law. There are no provisions for a review/screening for approval to participate in the equivalent certification program prior to such employment due to staffing/review requirements;
- Complete all of the following basic entry-level core courses when scheduled during a three week training program at the state's entry level training academy within twelve (12) months from the date of employment, currently held during September of each year:
 - Firearms Training and Certification;
 - Emergency Vehicles Operations Course;
 - Defensive Tactics;
 - Laws of Arrest;
 - West Virginia Motor Vehicle Law;
 - Criminal Law;
 - Domestic Crimes; and,
 - Laws of Search and Seizure

- Equivalent certification applicants shall submit in conjunction with the required application within 90 days a complete medical examination which shows they meet the requirements for admission to a basic entry-level training program.
- The Law Enforcement Professional Standards (LEPS) Subcommittee shall review all applications for equivalent certification. The Equivalent Certification Committee of the LEPS Subcommittee shall determine if the applicant's prior law enforcement training is equivalent to the training standards then applicable in West Virginia and make a recommendation to the law enforcement professional standards sub-committee as to whether the applicant is eligible for equivalent certification.
- The wording "equivalent to the training standards then applicable in West Virginia" means that the officer's entry level training program from another state will be compared against the length of the entry level training program in place in West Virginia **at the time of the review** (emphasis added to reflect that as the length of the entry level training program changes that the hours reviewed to determine equivalency changes as well) In-service and ongoing law enforcement related training and length of employment may be considered during the review in conjunction with the length of the entry level training program when reviewing officers with extended work histories from other jurisdictions. It is not just the number of hours completed in the officer's prior entry level training, the classes completed must be considered to be equivalent to the classes that make up our entry level training program.
- The LEPS Subcommittee has set a policy that military law enforcement training will not be considered as prior entry level law training as to a request to participate in this program.
- A fee of \$750 to be paid by the officer's employing agency shall be paid while the officer is completing the required core classes.
- While the officer is completing the application and review process, he or she may work as a sworn officer in West Virginia with all applicable arrest powers as to the policy of the employing agency. Should he or she be determined not eligible to participate in the equivalent certification process he or she may elect to attend the full entry level training program. If he or she does not elect to do so then he must stop working as a sworn officer immediately.
- Individuals employed as a head of a law enforcement agency in West Virginia are exempt from the certification requirements of a law enforcement officer in West Virginia. Should an individual elect to use that exemption and subsequently seek to become certified as a law enforcement officer in West Virginia, even if under the guidelines discussed as to the equivalent certification process he or she would have been approved to participate in, he or she would then have to attend the full entry level training program.

Questions concerning this program may be directed to the LEPS Program staff at 304-558-8814.