



Economic Impact Analysis Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

6 VAC 20-20 – Rules Relating to Compulsory Minimum Training Standards for Law-Enforcement Officers

Department of Criminal Justice Services

June 16, 2000

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) has analyzed the economic impact of this proposed regulation in accordance with Section 9-6.14:7.1.G of the Administrative Process Act and Executive Order Number 25 (98). Section 9-6.14:7.1.G requires that such economic impact analyses include, but need not be limited to, the projected number of businesses or other entities to whom the regulation would apply, the identity of any localities and types of businesses or other entities particularly affected, the projected number of persons and employment positions to be affected, the projected costs to affected businesses or entities to implement or comply with the regulation, and the impact on the use and value of private property. The analysis presented below represents DPB's best estimate of these economic impacts.

Summary of the Proposed Regulation

The current Rules Relating to Compulsory Minimum Training Standards for Law-Enforcement Officers contains an optional category for training academies on physical training. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (department) proposes to make physical training standards a mandatory component of entry-level training for law enforcement officers.

Estimated Economic Impact

There are 23 criminal justice academies in the Commonwealth that are certified to train entry-level law enforcement officers. The department estimates that 17 of the academies currently train in compliance with most or all of the proposed physical standards, and that two have sent staff to fitness leadership training and plan to start training in compliance with the physical standards by this fall, while the remaining four conduct minimal or no physical training. For the academies that currently do not train for compliance with the proposed physical

standards the cost of initiating the training would be \$500 or less for equipment.¹ Also, the academies would need to add three to five hours of instruction time per week to properly conduct this training. According to the department, the introduction of the physical standards training will not reduce the time spent on other mandatory training. In summary, for the academies that currently conduct minimal or no physical training, the proposed physical standards will cost \$500 or less for equipment, three to five hours of time for the trainees, three to five hours of time and perhaps salary for the instructors, and the cost of sending staff to fitness leadership training (for the four academies that have yet to do this). For the 17 academies that currently train on most or all of the proposed physical standards, the proposed physical standards will impose little or no cost.

The physical training standards include instruction in the proper techniques for activities such as knocking down or kicking open blocked or locked doors, jumping down from various heights, vaulting over obstacles, climbing through windows, moving heavy objects in order to effect a rescue, and pushing a motor vehicle out of traffic. It seems likely that learning proper technique can have at least two significant benefits: improved job performance and reduced incidence of injury. If, for example, learning proper technique enables a law-enforcement officer to more effectively knock down doors, vault over obstacles, climb through windows, etc., he or she may be more successful at capturing suspects and saving potential victims from harm. Also, learning the proper techniques to move heavy objects in order to effect a rescue, to push a motor vehicle out of traffic, etc., may improve the likelihood that lives are saved or the injuries of citizens are minimized. If learning proper technique reduces the probability of officers incurring injury, then in addition to the obvious benefit to the officer of not being injured, localities may benefit from reduced costs associated with health insurance, worker's compensation, and overtime or new hires to replace the injured officer.

The physical training standards include demonstrations of physical fitness. This may produce another potential benefit. According to the department, "a physically fit officer is less likely to use a gun. ... In a publicized case in Washington, D. C. this year, an officer admitted firing his weapon at a suspect because he knew that he was too out of shape to chase the suspect." Though there is no known study that demonstrates how common it is for officers to

¹ Source: Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

use excessive force due to lack of fitness, to the extent that it happens at all, improved officer fitness may reduce the incidence of excessive force. One factor to keep in mind is that the proposed requirement for demonstrations of physical fitness in these regulations only applies to time at the training academies. Since the officer can easily become out-of-shape once he or she leaves the academy, the potential benefit of this proposed requirement is somewhat limited.

Since there are no estimates available for the potential benefits associated with reduced risk of injury, improved probability of catching suspects and saving potential victims from harm, etc., due to the proposed required training, an accurate comparison between benefits and costs cannot be made. It seems probable, though, that if the training is successful in significantly improving the physical techniques of law-enforcement officers, the benefits will outweigh the costs.

Businesses and Entities Affected

The proposed revised regulations potentially affect the 23 criminal justice training academies in the Commonwealth that are certified to train entry-level law enforcement officers, as well as their training staff and entry-level law officers. In 1999 there were 1,323 law enforcement officers trained at certified criminal justice training academies.²

Localities Particularly Affected

The proposed regulatory changes affect all Virginia localities.

Projected Impact on Employment

The proposed regulatory change will require the six academies that currently conduct minimal or no physical training to add three to five hours of instruction per week.³ According to the department, “academies not already fulfilling the physical training requirements will most likely assign this duty to current staff or obtain volunteers to lead this training.” Thus, the proposed new requirement may not result in new paid staff hired. It may result in additional hours worked and commensurate pay for current staff.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Effects on the Use and Value of Private Property

The proposed regulatory change may result in a small amount of new business for firms that sell equipment associated with physical standards training.