



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Peter Hans, President

Public Safety Memo PS20-02

Please Share as Needed

March 20, 2020

To: **Department of Justice School Directors and Qualified Assistants**

From: **Tracy McPherson, Director, Public Safety Training Programs**
NCCCS System President Representative, Criminal Justice Commission
NCCCS System President Representative, Sheriffs' Commission

Nathan Mizell, Dean of Continuing Education, Martin Community College
NC Law Enforcement Training Officers Association Representative, Criminal Justice Commission

RE: **Criminal Justice Training – COVID-19 Update**

The purpose of this email is to check in with you at this uncertain time and to provide as much information as we have access to related to courses offered under your authority as School Directors for programs under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission (CJ Commission) and/or the NC Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission (Sheriffs' Commission).

First a few caveats:

- **This is an informal informational update** from us as your representatives to these Commissions. However, we cannot and should not be the original source of guidance to you on these programs and policies. This memo is an information update on conversations we are part of on your behalf. **Do not take this memo as the original source document on policy.**
- If we do refer to specific policy statements, we will note the original source. Please always check that this is the latest guidance, as these situations are fluid and guidance may change over time.
- **Official guidance must come only from the appropriate staff at CJ Standards and Sheriffs' Standards.** They are the only ones authorized to serve as staff to the Commissions. They are the official points of contact always.

That said, we offer the following updates to reassure you that efforts are being made to try to provide greater scheduling flexibility in response to the COVID-19 situation:

Sheriffs' Commission Guidance

On March 19, 2020, Sheriffs' Standards Staff provided the following update via email from Autumn Hanna titled Brief Update and dated 03/19/2020 4:17:24 PM:

- In regards to classes suspended after they began – right now, the rule still stands that once a class has been suspended for **one full week**, it cannot resume. **While the rule remains in effect, we (Sheriffs' Standards) are actively looking at possible options for the future. I (Autumn Hanna) will update you as soon as I have more information.**

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- We (Sheriffs' Standards) will **not** be issuing suspensions while we are under the declared State of Emergency. The procedure for requesting additional time for students affected by class cancellations and suspensions will be clarified at a later (later) date.
- Please continue to let me (Autumn Hanna) know as soon as possible if your class is cancelled, suspended, or ongoing. It is **imperative** that you let me know the status of any and all upcoming DOCC or TCC classes as soon as anything changes.

CJ Commission Guidance

On March 19, 2020, Sheriffs' Standards Staff provided the following update via email from Michelle Schilling titled Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and Impact on BLET and dated 03/13/2020 2:37 PM:

- (CJ) Division staff and the (CJ) Commission have been closely monitoring the Covid-19 (corona virus) situation and the impact on delivery sites currently administering a Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) course. We are working to identify appropriate courses of action for these delivery sites to preserve the management of the BLET course schedule in keeping with the NC Administrative Code.
- Currently, per 12 NCAC 09B .0202(b)(2), School Directors may utilize three one-week breaks during the scheduled BLET course. These three one-week breaks may be taken consecutively, which would allow a three week break in the BLET schedule.
- (CJ) Staff will be working with the (CJ) Commission to determine a course of action if it is determined a three week break will not be adequate under these circumstances. As decisions are made, this information will be distributed to all of our partners as quickly as possible.
- BLET School Directors who postpone the BLET course schedule will need to provide email communication to me (Michelle Schilling) regarding the date the course schedule is being suspended and when course schedule activities have resumed. A new state exam administration date and location will be assigned. School Directors are then encouraged to provide a lesson review of previously administered course materials to maximize student success. This review can be done online or in person.
- As a reminder, **no** BLET courses may be administered in an online platform.
- The closing of the delivery sites will result in significant changes in the dates and locations for state exam administration.
- Your patience and cooperation during this time is greatly appreciated. We (CJ Standards) will send out communication, as needed, to ensure our School Directors have the information they need to plan accordingly.
- Please contact me (Michelle Schilling) if you have any questions.

CJ Commission and Sheriffs' Commission Updates

This is our understanding based only on emails and meetings we have been privy to (not official policy);

- As implied in the email guidance above, Both Standards' staffs and both Commissions are actively seeking authority to provide greater flexibility to the training timeline limitations currently prescribed by NC Administrative Code for Commission-related courses.

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- Executive Committees of both Commissions have met this week to approve language to request such authority to override current rules, as they deem necessary and appropriate, through Governor's Executive Order or through the Emergency Rules process related to NC Administrative Code. However, either remedy will take some time to accomplish. And until or unless this is done/approved, all are still under current NCAC rules and ongoing guidance from CJ and Sheriffs' Standards.
- An option being actively discussed is authority to hold students and the programs harmless during the duration of the state's official declaration of State of Emergency, which began on March 14, 2020. The goal would be to allow delivery entities to suspend operations and resume once the State of Emergency is declared over. Details are still being worked out on this, but active efforts are underway.
- It is our understanding that if such flexibility is authorized, it would be the goal to also allow BLET School Directors to use the already authorized three one-week breaks for days before and/or after the declared statewide State of Emergency. However, as noted, none of this has been officially approved yet (and any revised rule may be different from what we are describing). We can merely confirm that there have been active and serious conversations about this option.

NC Community College System Guidance

A memo also been issued by the Community College System Office related to online and face-to-face instruction in light of COVID-19. This memo, numbered CC20-021 and titled "College Guidance for Instructional Response to COVID-19," includes specific language related to public safety training.

Memo CC20-021 is available online here: <https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/numbered-memos>

Contact Us

We know that you are having to balance many unknowns and constantly emerging guidance from CJ Standards, Sheriffs' Standards, the Community College System Office, and your local College. As your liaisons to these related Commissions, we feel an extra obligation to try to help keep you informed and also help connect dots or advocate on your behalf on identified needs or concerns, as appropriate.

We, of course, do not and cannot replace your direct relationship to the Commissions and to your colleges as far as policy and procedure are concerned. However, we do hope that we can provide some helpful support, especially at this time. Please feel free to reach out to either of us if you have questions or concerns that you think we can assist with. We are always interested in the success of your Criminal Justice training programs and wish to hear about your best practices as well as your challenges, at this or any time.

We can be reached as follows: Nathan Mizell at nathan.mizell@martincc.edu and Tracy McPherson at mcphersont@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

Thank you for all that you do to ensure that your students are Ready to Work and Ready to Respond. You make a difference every day in your community and across the state.

C: Chief Academic Officers
Senior Continuing Education Administrators, NCCCS
Steven Combs, CJ Standards
Michelle Schilling, CJ Standards

Diane Konopka, Sheriffs' Standards
Autumn Hanna, Sheriffs' Standards