

# **What Elements of the San Jose Field Training Model Should be Used, Added, or Standardized to Remain Current for New Recruits and Trainers?**

**Gary E. Loos**

## *Abstract*

*This is a research paper that deals with inconsistencies of the Officer Field Training Programs from around the State of Florida. The primary focus of this paper is on the San Jose Model of field training of new police officers. This is the state accepted training model which is used in training throughout the state. This paper contains surveys and graphs that show by way of phone surveys and mail out surveys the differences from around the state. It shows that the majority of the State of Florida Police Agencies are consistent with the programs that are in place while others have not made any adjustments for the changing times and technological advances.*

## Introduction

This topic has been of an interest to me for many years. As a career Police Officer with over 30 years of experience I have been involved in the training of officers (Field Training) and now as a supervisor the development of officers on many different career paths. Since leaving the active field training officer program, upon promotion to supervision, I have observed many changes in the program in my agency from its ground roots to a form that as a supervisor in patrol I could tell was detrimental to the department and officer development in general.

A key element in the Field Training Program was the involvement of the patrol Sergeant with the Field Training Program. Not so much in the day to day training of the recruits but in monitoring of the Field Training Officers under their span of control to see that they were doing what their job called for. The Field supervisors would read and approve the DOR (Daily Observation Report) insuring that everything was documented properly before it was forwarded to training. I saw this being removed and all reports and responsibilities of the program being shifted to a point that was far removed from actual knowledge of what training and experiences trainees were getting and being shifted to a remote office. The program was being governed by someone removed from actual police work due in part to promotion or appointment. Additionally, I observed many weak trainees who would fail out of the program if they continued with qualified and dedicated FTO's, being placed with Field Training Officers known for their good nature and attitude who would pass all being supported by the administration.

This observed negligent retention further reduces the agencies and program of its credibility. On the reverse, the outstanding and dedicated Field Training Officers were seeing the lion's share of trainees without breaks. As an observer of the Field Training Officers it was apparent that the active and hard

working Field Training Officers were at the breaking point and for the most part they were all suffering from burnout. Yet this was not recognized by the program administrators who felt discipline as the way to deal with poor attitude and break down of the FTO's. The program claimed to have evaluations done on the FTO's, yet no feed back was provided to the trainers themselves nor could a trainee be found who had conducted an evaluation of the Training Officers.

The research conducted both in literature review and surveys will demonstrate that the Field Training Program needs to have input and cooperation from the on patrol supervisors as expressed By Glenn Kaminsky in his book "The Field Training Concept in Criminal Justice Agencies." His book also speaks of evaluation of the Field Training Officer and negligent retention. (Kaminsky, 2002). This is supported by a second article by M. Meehan which discusses evaluating Field Training Officers and what is discovered. (Meehan, 2001). In an article that I read by Kirby Beck there is a discussion about Field Training Officer burnout and preventing it. (Beck, early 1990's).

What I intend to establish in the research that I am conducting are several things that are accepted around the State of Florida as standards that should be established for all field training programs. Active participation of field supervisors with the Field Training Officers and trainees, evaluation of the Field Training Officers to discover ability and early signs of burnout and to see if the San Jose Model of Field Training is still the prominent form of recruit training and further to determine if agencies are modifying it to take into account the technological advances being made in the Law Enforcement field.

## Methods

The purpose of this survey is to determine several things in regards to the Officer Field Training Program both from an administrative viewpoint and officer viewpoint. Areas addressed are standards of training, involvement of supervision, how the programs are managed and if departments are adjusting to the current trend of technical advancements in their training methods.

This research paper was conducted with the aid of several police departments from around the State of Florida. In order to maintain a sense of relevancy to my agency, I attempted to use police departments of similar size to my agency (City of Melbourne) with a plus or minus of 50 Officers to allow for a greater range of input. This survey had a total of 30 agencies chosen for use. The department officer numbers were provided by an FDLE list of agencies which were listed numerically by the number of officers that each agency had. (FDLE 2007)

I developed 2 separate survey instruments to use in this project with the idea of getting the viewpoint from Field Training Officer coordinators or supervisors and a second viewpoint from the actual Field Training Officers.

The first survey instrument was developed to be used in a telephone survey of the identified Law Enforcement Agencies Field Training Officer coordinator or supervisor whichever official was recognized by the individual

agencies. This survey was set up with 12 questions, nine (9) of the questions as a yes or no for the answer and three (3) questions requiring a specific number response to the survey question.

As part of the telephone survey I obtained commitments from the Field Training Coordinators to hand out and return the written survey aspect of my research project that was targeting the actual Field Training Officers.

The written survey consists of eight (8) questions with a Lykert rating scale for its answer section. The scale has Five (5) possible answers which are from one (1) to five (5) with one (1) being Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, three (3) being No Opinion, (4) being Agree and five (5) being Strongly Agree.

At this point it had been discovered that there were a few limitations in this method. One of the limitations was that in order to conduct the telephone survey I was dependant on catching up with the correct person by phone, or return telephone calls. This was extremely time consuming along with the fact that once connected there was more information and mutual conversation between myself and the Field Training Coordinators. This was also a positive issue that will be documented in the results and conclusion. Another Flaw was in the survey groups chosen. The numbers of Law Enforcement officers in the agencies by FDLE are not completely accurate resulting in contacting, in some cases, significantly larger agencies. Of the 30 agencies chosen for the survey I was successful after many hours of phone calls, messages being left and returned to contact 23 agency Field Training coordinators. Of the 23 written survey packages that I have sent out to these agencies I have received returns of 14 survey packages each of which may have up to 12 individual surveys completed by current Field Training Officers.

## Results

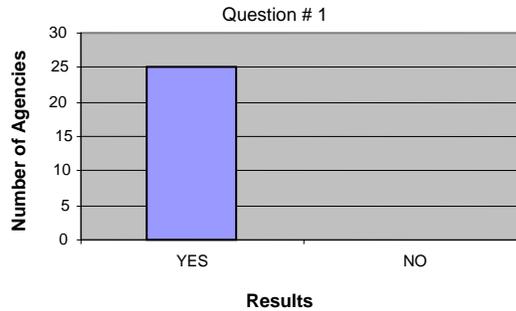
Of the 30 agencies that were chosen from around the State of Florida I was able to make telephone contact with 23 of the agencies Field Training coordinators. The titles of these Field Training coordinators' ranged from the position of officer/deputy, to as high as the rank of Major.

During this telephone contact the Field Training coordinators that I spoke with were asked specific questions that had been prepared for the telephone survey (Appendix A).

While making the telephone survey an unexpected benefit occurred that will be discussed later in some depth. Most of the Field Training Officer coordinators had a desire to express to me what worked for them and what problems that they were having in their own programs. This voluntary information will be included in the discussion portion of this report.

The results of the survey by question are listed as follows. Nine of the questions required a yes or no answer. Three of the questions required a numerical figure that was specific to each Law Enforcement agency interviewed. The results of the three questions will be presented as an average of the 23 answers obtained.

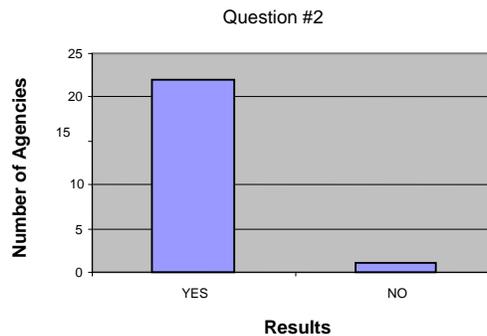
**Question # 1**  
**Does your agency have a Field Training Program?**



23 Yes 0 No

Yes, all agencies have a field-training program for their new officers who participated in this survey. The question may appear to be unnecessary but in itself it provides the justification and relevance to the rest of the survey.

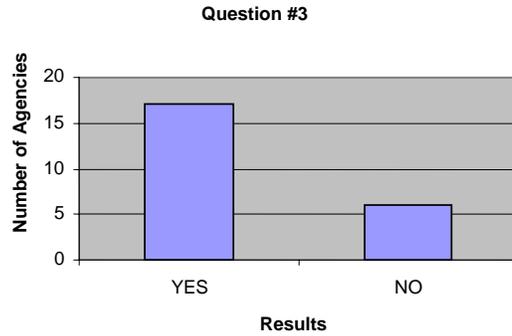
**Question # 2**  
**Does your agency's Field Training Program follow the San Jose Model?**



22 Yes 1 No

The vast majority of the law enforcement agencies follow the San Jose Model of field training of new officers but not all do.

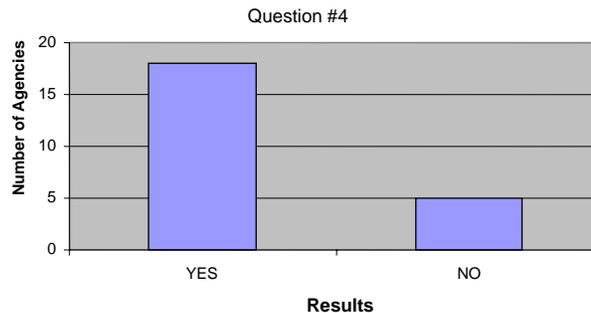
**Question # 3**  
**During Field Training, trainees are evaluated, do your field supervisors take an active role in this evaluation process?**



17 Yes 6 No

Here is where the differences in agency implementation of the San Jose Model of field training of officers start to vary. A few agencies believing that field supervisors do not need to be involved in the Field training programs of their agency.

**Question # 4**  
**Do Field supervisors review trainees Daily Observation Report (DOR) before being turned into training?**

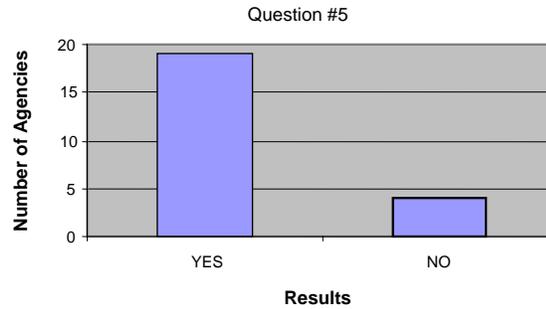


18 Yes 5 No

Once again this is an area that not all agencies agree on and it is once again different from agencies who do not wish Field supervisors to be involved.

### Question # 5

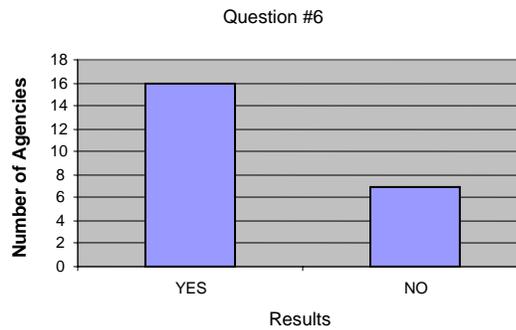
Are Field Supervisors part of the decision making factor between trainees move from one Field Training phase to another?



19 Yes 4 No

### Question # 6

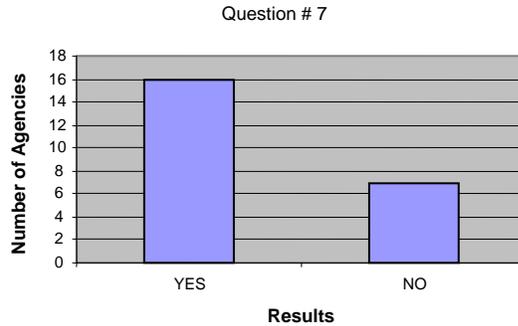
Are your Field Training Officers evaluated by the trainees at the end of a training phase?



16 Yes 7 No

### Question # 7

**Does your agency provide feedback to its Field Training Officers concerning trainee's evaluations of them in a timely fashion?**



16 Yes 7 No

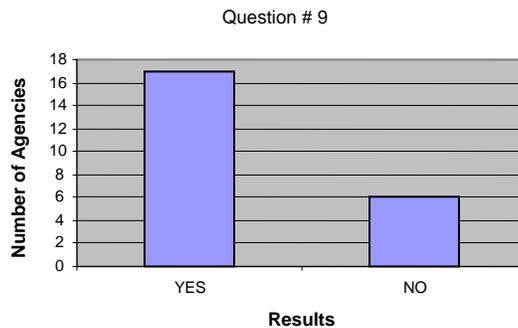
### Question # 8

**How long do you have your Field Training period go with officer trainee's before they are allowed to work as a SOLO officer?**

The average answer for this question was 14 weeks. It ranged from a low of 8 weeks by 2 different agency's to a high of greater than 18 weeks by 1 agency.

### Question # 9

**Has your program been modified to take into account the advancements in technology for law enforcement?**



17 Yes 6 No

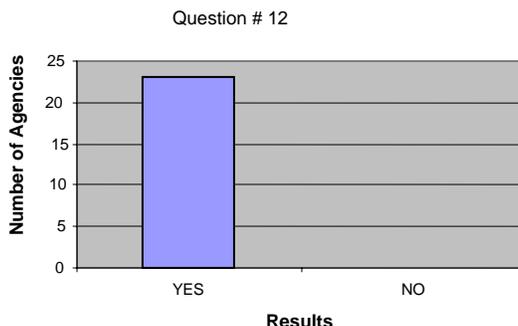
**Question # 10**  
**How many Field Training Officers does your agency have?**

The average number of Field Training Officers in each agency is 17.5. 6 agencies's had more than 20 Field Training officers each which were the over 220 member departments. If you deducted those agency's the average significantly changes to 12.3 Field Training Officers per agency.

**Question 11**  
**How many officers does your agency have?**

The average number of officers was 208 per department but once again if you deduct the 6 agencies of greater than 220 members the average would be 172 officers.

**Question # 12**  
**Would you be willing to disseminate survey forms to your Field Training Officers for me if I sent them to you with a return envelope?**



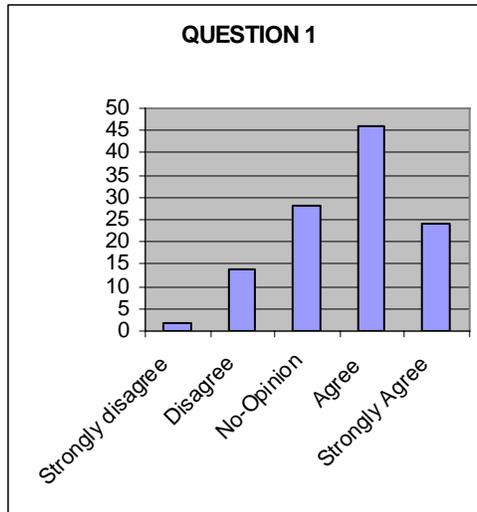
23 Yes 0 No

All agencies that I contacted agreed to provide the surveys to their Field Training Officers and have them returned. However the result was a return of 14 packages with a total of 114 Field Training Officers completing the written survey the results to be discussed as follows.

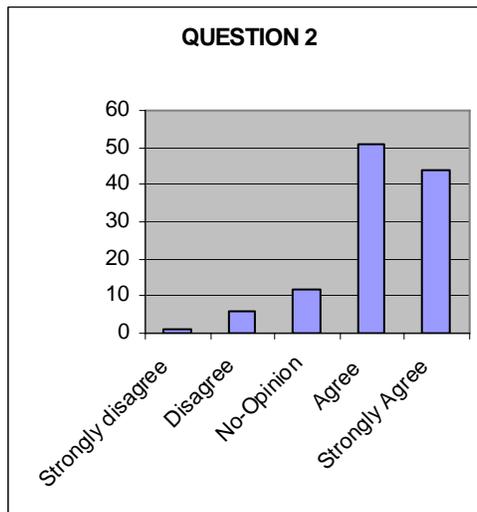
This was, as indicated before, a two phase research project with the first phase being the telephone survey. The second phase, of the research project was a written survey response from the Field Training Officers themselves. In the first portion the survey was completed from the managers' aspect of the Field Training program and the second phase is from the actual Field Training Officers. The discussion and recommendations after reviewing the following question response may be an eye opener for some managers.

Sent out to the various agencies were 12 introduction letters (Appendix B) attached to 12 written survey's (Appendix C) along with a return envelope. The following questions and responses are the results of those written surveys

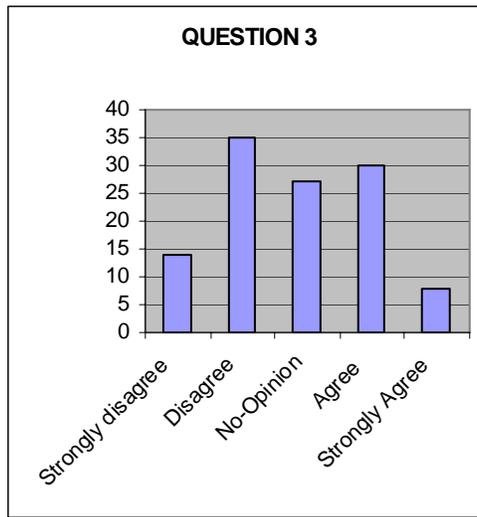
**# 1. Do you believe that following the San Jose Model of training police recruits is the best method of training of a new trainee for the Solo fieldwork available?**



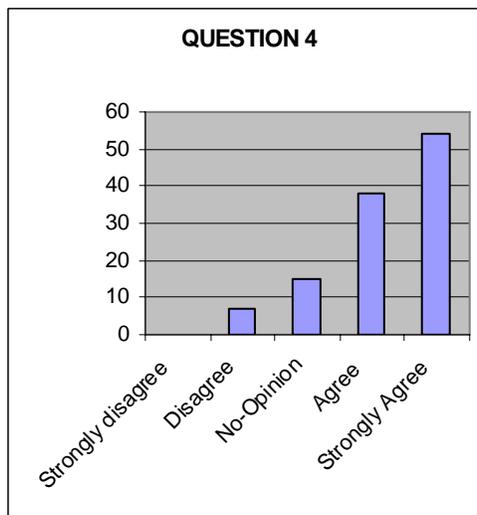
**# 2. Do you think it is beneficial to you and your agency for a new hire or trainee in the Field Training Program, to evaluate you as a trainer once he/she has completed a training phase?**



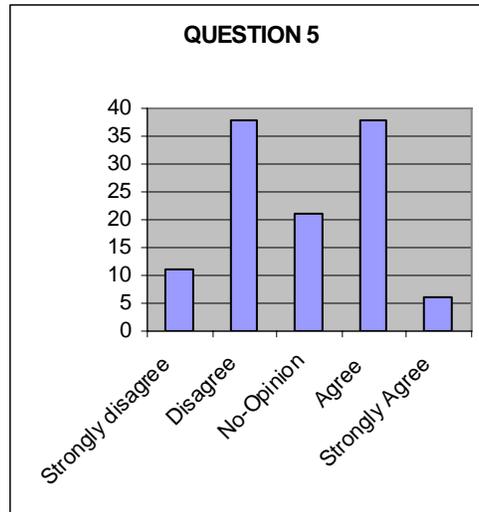
**# 3. Does your agency provide you feed back in a timely fashion of your training abilities as rated by your Trainee's?**



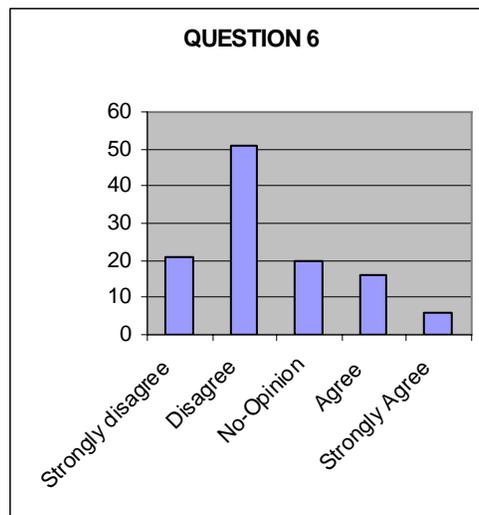
**# 4. Do you think it is beneficial for the Field Supervisors Sergeant and/or Lieutenant to have an active part in your agencies FTO program by reviewing the daily observation reports and providing input on the trainee?**



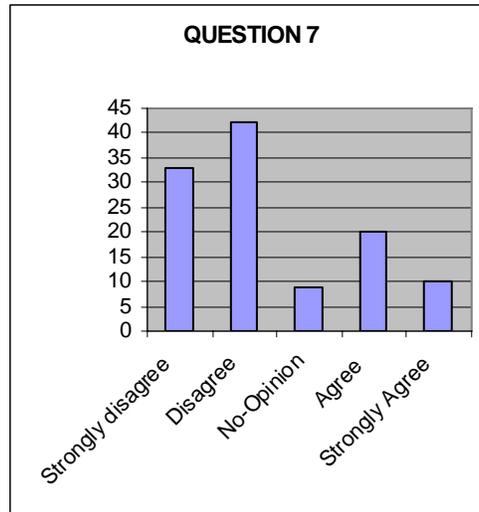
**# 5. Do you believe that the current method of training recruits with the technology that is developing in law enforcement is sufficient to be released as a Solo officer without additional training?**



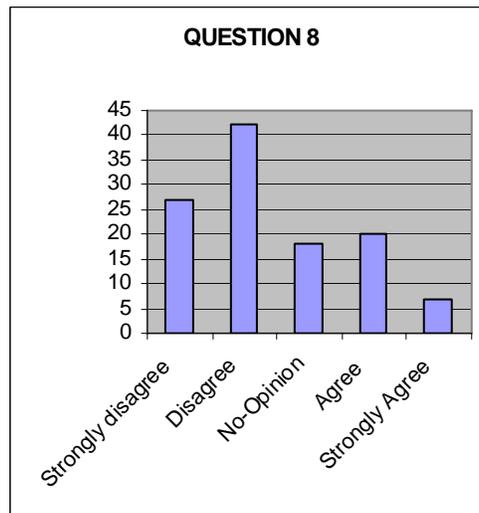
**# 6. Do you think that a paperless evaluation form that is e-mailed to the Trainee's Training officer, without review by the Road supervisor, to be a method of evaluating a trainee that would be more efficient?**



**# 7. Do you believe that Field Training Officers can properly train a new recruit without the support of the road supervisor and achieve the highest level of success?**



**#8. Would you say that one Field Training Coordinator without assistance from road supervisors has the ability to keep track of all trainee's and Field Training Officers that are in the program at any one time efficiently for the benefit of the department?**



## Discussion

I have provided the results of the two surveys that I conducted; one part dealing primarily with Field Training Officer coordinators and the second part actually dealing with the men and women who actually do the training.

In the phone survey it was established that all law enforcement agencies contacted had an organized training program for their newly hired police officers with only one agency having a training program that was not following the San Jose Training model. In speaking with the coordinator of this agency they had developed their own field training methods that were not based on any of the established models such as the San Jose Training model or the Reno Community Policing Training model. The method of training is based on proficiency. The organization that I speak of is Coral Springs Police Department if you wish to look into this training model.

Telephone survey questions three, four and five deal with the importance of the field supervisors in the field training program from being active in the program to decision making of retaining or dismissing a newly hired officer. In a ratio of approximately 3 to one from around the State of Florida, agencies recognize the need for the field supervisors to be an active part of the field training program.

These three questions stirred up considerable discussion in the support of active participation by field supervisors. As one Field Training Coordinator stated during the telephone survey, why should I deprive myself of the eyes and ears that are working with these trainees and not have them actively involved. Another stated that part of their department's requirements for its sergeants was to attend a school that deals with Managing the Field Training Officer program. By attending this school they can manage the Field Training Officers under their span of control and have the knowledge of what exactly is needed or available to see that a new recruit is trained completely. They can also initiate early intervention when a problem with a trainee is detected prior to a centralized coordinator can.

Additionally the same supervisors that see and hear the trainee and trainer in action need to have some say in retention, extension or termination of a new hire by what is seen verses what a remote coordinator decides based on paperwork only in the form of daily observation reports. Too many times a salvageable trainee is terminated or one that should be terminated is retained due to administrative influences that have a negative impact on the veracity of the Field Training Program and what it is meant to do. An example of this may be, Hire and Retain regardless of candidate so that we do not loose the position (political reason).

In questions six and seven, of the telephone survey of Field Training Coordinators deals with rating (by trainees) of the Field Training Officers along with advising the Field Training officers on their abilities and weaknesses in a timely fashion. This correlates with the written survey questions presented to the Field Training Officers in written survey questions two and three. What is agreed on by the majority of both coordinators and Field Training Officers is that

evaluations are done and that they are important. Less than one third of the agencies do not have the trainees evaluate their trainers.

What is disagreed upon, which administratively needs to be looked at, is that the Field Training Officers do not feel by a vast majority that they are informed of how they have been rated. On the other hand the Field Training Coordinators feel by a vast majority that they do keep the Field Training Officers informed of their strengths and weaknesses. This comparison is based on the numbers as returned by the survey and could be a reason that the subject of Field Training Officer burnout is not recognized at its early stages. This is a topic that was not directly addressed in the written format of the survey's conducted but came about as a by product of the telephone survey's.

During the telephone survey several questions came up and in some cases suggestions were offered in reference to the new recruits that are being hired in regards to the number of Field Training Officers each agency had to conduct the training (question # 10). One agency of approximately 200 officers has only 8 Field Training Officers and some back-up Field Training Officers. In speaking with this training coordinator his trainers were doing back to back training of new recruits without breaks. The reason for this is that in his agency an FTO was a corporal and they had contractual issues. The back-up trainers could only be used if the primary was on vacation or sick. He has recognized the symptoms of Field Training Officer burnout and his hands were tied in his belief to help since his administration did not understand the stresses of being a Field Training Officer without breaks between training sessions. In discussions with other agencies the low number of Field Training Officers was not as great but they still run on the low side with limited abilities across the state to give Field Training Officers breaks between trainees. In agencies below 220 members the average number of Field Training Officers is only 12.3 per agency.

Burnout of Field Training Officers is real and needs to be a concern with agencies and recognized in its early stages. If it is not recognized it may result in the Field Training Officers resigning from their positions (due to lack of breaks and constant pressure of training new officers) up to disciplinary issues (loosing control due to frustration of no breaks and constant training pressures). Claiming to understand burnout and not doing anything to alleviate it is in it self not understanding it. This is an area that the Field Training Officer coordinator and law enforcement administrators need to take a moment to look at.

In question number 9 of the telephone survey the question was asked if agencies were modifying their training programs to keep up with the technological advances that were occurring in law enforcement. (In car computers, silent dispatching, less lethal, automatic reporting systems as examples). Once again about a 3 to 1 ratio of agencies are modifying their programs to take into account the technical advances that are occurring in law enforcement. Some have extended their orientation phase to include computer training while others have passed the responsibility onto their Field Training Officers, other agencies had not given it a thought until asked. This is an area that can set a new recruit back in confidence and training if it is not addressed early. This question correlates with the Field Training Officer written survey

question number five. The opinion by the Field Training Officers is almost split down the middle of agreement and disagreement. With these numbers agencies should look at their programs with a critical eye in regards to technological training of new recruits only half of the agencies are doing sufficient training while half are not. The opinion of the coordinators on this subject by a 3 to1 ratio is that the training has been done and the programs have been updated to allow for technical training.

In questions number seven and eight of the Field Training Officer written survey it was discussed their opinion of the need for the field supervisors being actively involved in the training of new officers and the ability of one coordinator to be efficient in the training of Trainees without the field supervisors' involvement.

Overwhelmingly, the opinion of the Field Training Officers is one that they can not properly train a trainee without the support of the road supervisor. And again overwhelmingly, the Field Training Officers do not believe that a centralized Field Training coordinator can effectively oversee and run the program without the assistance of the field supervisors.

There are only a few questions that have not been discussed in detail whose numbers are speaking for themselves. As you can see by the questions and discussions that were brought up the opinions of the individual Field Training Officer coordinators and that of the Field Training Officers does not always match. In some cases they are complete disagreement. This should let administrators realize that they may have some issues to address, some streamlining to do or some complete system overhauls to look into.

## Recommendations

- If not in place implement a review system of your Field Training Officers by the trainees.
- Provide feedback to Field Training Officers of trainee evaluations in a timely fashion.
- Utilize your Field Supervisors in the Field Training Program actively to review evaluations and make recommendations.
- Become aware of Field Training Officer Burnout and take steps to avoid it.
- Eliminate one person coordination and evaluation of Field Training Programs, have a coordinator with Field Supervisor interaction.
- Add 'Managing a Field Training Officer Program' to supervisory school list for all Sergeants and Lieutenants who have field supervisory responsibilities.
- Review your current technological training methods for your new hires and improve them if necessary.
- Build breaks into your Field Training Officer Program in-between trainees for your Field Training Officers.
- Treat your Field Training Officers as a nonexpendable resource; this may involve pay, time off, new cars, rank, or other benefit contractually allowed.

Lieutenant Gary Loos has been in law enforcement since 1976 when he began his career in New York State. He joined the Melbourne Police Department in 1981 and has been a part of the Dive Recovery Team, Crisis Negotiation Team, and worked five years in Narcotics Investigation. Gary has been a Field Training Officer, Sergeant and is currently the Night Shift Watch Commander. Gary has an associate's degree in Criminal Justice from State University of New York at Farmingdale and is pursuing his bachelor's degree at Barry University.

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[http://naftoonline.com//index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=30](http://naftoonline.com//index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=30)
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**APPENDIX A**

**TELEPHONE SURVEY FORM**

**DEPARTMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. DOES YOUR AGENCY HAVE A FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM? Y\_\_\_ N\_\_\_**

**2. DOES YOUR AGENCIES FTO PROGRAM FOLLOW THE SAN JOSE MODEL? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**3. DURING FIELD TRAINING TRAINEES ARE EVALUATED, DO YOUR FIELD SUPERVISORS TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THIS EVALUATION PROCESS? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**4. DO FIELD SUPERVISORS REVIEW TRAINEES DAILY OBSERVATION REPORTS (DOR) BEFORE BEING TURNED INTO TRAINING? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**5. ARE FIELD SUPERVISORS PART OF THE DECISION MAKING FACTOR BETWEEN TRAINEE'S MOVE FROM ONE FIELD TRAINING PHASE TO ANOTHER? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**6. ARE YOU'RE FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS EVALUATED BY THE TRAINEE'S AT THE END OF A TRAINING PHASE? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**7. DOES YOUR AGENCY PROVIDE FEED BACK TO ITS FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS CONCERNING TRAINEE'S EVALUATIONS OF THEM IN A TIMELY FASHION? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**8. HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE YOUR FIELD TRAINING PERIOD GO WITH OFFICERS TRAINEE'S BEFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO WORK AS A SOLO OFFICER?**

**8 WEEKS\_\_ 12 WEEKS\_\_ 16 WEEKS\_\_ GREATER THAN 16 WEEKS\_\_**

**9. HAS YOUR PROGRAM BEEN MODIFIED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ADVANCEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT? Y\_\_N\_\_**

**10. HOW MANY FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS DOES YOUR AGENCY HAVE?\_\_\_\_\_**

**11. HOW MANY OFFICERS DOES YOUR AGENCY HAVE?\_\_\_\_\_**

**12. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO DECEMINATE SURVEY FORMS TO YOUR FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS FOR ME IF I SENT THEM TO YOU WITH A RETURN ENVELOPE? Y\_\_N\_\_**

## **APPENDIX B**

Dear Law Enforcement Professionals,

I have found that there are inconsistencies in Field Training Programs from Department to Department with many claiming to follow the same model (San Jose) of training program. What I am trying to determine is what aspects of this model is utilized in the most consistent fashion, what is found to be important and if this style of training is working with the generation of recruits that are being hired at this time.

Let me start out by introducing myself and providing a reason for this survey. My name is Gary Loos and I am a patrol Lieutenant with the Melbourne City Police Department.

I have over 30 years of police experience both here in Florida and out of state. I have been with the City of Melbourne for over 25 years and I am currently attending the Senior Leadership School sponsored by Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in Tallahassee.

Part of the class requirements is to conduct a research paper on a subject that we individually find of interest. This brings me to the reason that I have asked for your assistance in completing the attached survey.

I would like to take the time now for your participation in this short survey. If you would like a copy of the results please let me know at the end of the survey.

Lieutenant Gary E. Loos

Melbourne Police Department

**APPENDIX C**

**Field Training Officers Survey Form**

Completed For Lt. Gary E. Loos  
Melbourne Police Department  
In association with Senior Leadership School Class #12  
Sponsored by Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)

Thank you for participating in this short survey your quick responses are greatly appreciated.

The following questions are based on the Lykert rating scale demonstrated below. Please answer as you believe and return. This should only take you a few moments. If you wish the results of the survey sent to you once it is completed please add your contact information at the end. **CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS WITH YOUR ANSWER.**

←-1-----2-----3-----4-----5-→  
STRONGLY DISAGREE DISAGREE NO-OPINION AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

1. Do you believe that following the San Jose Model of training police recruits is the best method of training of a new trainee for the Solo fieldwork available?  
1<>2<>3<>4<>5
  
2. Do you think it is beneficial to you and your agency for a new hire or trainee in the Field Training Program, to evaluate you as a trainer once he/she has completed a training phase?  
1<>2<>3<>4<>5
  
3. Does your agency provide you feed back in a timely fashion of your training abilities as rated by your Trainee's?  
1<>2<>3<>4<>5
  
4. Do you think it is beneficial for the Field Supervisors Sergeant/Lieutenant to have an active part in your agencies FTO program by reviewing the daily observation reports and providing input on the trainee?  
1<>2<>3<>4<>5
  
5. Do you believe that the current method of training recruits with the technology that is developing in law enforcement is sufficient to be released as a Solo officer without additional training?  
1<>2<>3<>4<>5

6. Do you think that a paperless evaluation form that is e-mailed to the Trainee's Training officer, without review by the Road supervisor, to be a method of evaluating a trainee that would be more efficient?

1<2<3<4<5

7. Do you believe that Field Training Officers can properly train a new recruit without the support of the road supervisor and achieve the highest level of success?

1<2<3<4<5

8. Would you say that one Field Training Co-Ordinator without assistance from road supervisors has the ability to keep track of all trainee's and Field Training Officers that are in the program at any one time efficiently for the benefit of the department?

1<2<3<4<5

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you would like the results of this survey sent to you please fill in the contact information below and I will send it to you upon completion.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_