



Public Safety Officers Standards and Training Council (POST) 2023 Annual Report

The council was formed in 2007 under 2-15-2029, MCA as an independent Quasi-judicial board.

Per 44-4-403, MCA the Council is required to set employment and training standards for all Public Safety Officers as defined in 44-4-401, MCA. In addition, the Council shall provide for the certification or recertification of public safety officers and for the suspension or revocation of certification of public safety officers.



44-4-402 Membership Council Representation Includes:

State Government Law Enforcement/Chief of Police/Sheriff/Department of Corrections/Law Enforcement Officer/Detention Center Administrator/Montana-Certified Tribal Law Enforcement/County Attorney/Board of Crime Control/Misdemeanor Probation Officer/Montana Citizens

POST certifies public safety officers in the following disciplines:

- Peace Officer
- Detention/Correction Officer
- Public Safety Communication Officer
- Coroner
- Reserve Officer
- Probation & Parole Officer
- Misdemeanor Probation/Pretrial Service Officer

POST submitted two bills for the 2023 Legislative Session. Both bills passed the Senate and House and were signed by the governor.

HB77 amended section 44-4-404, clarified that all public safety officers may apply for a 180 extension to complete the minimum training standards. The applications must explain the circumstances that make the extension necessary, effective on passage and approval.

HB78 amended section 44-4-404, if a public safety officer is ordered to state or federal military duty and has not completed the minimum training standards within 1 year of the officer's hire date the public safety officer's time to complete the minimum training standards must be stayed, effective on passage and approval and applies retroactively on or after July 1, 2022.

In addition, during the 2019 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed HB 684, which placed POST staff under the Department of Justice as the Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Bureau. This legislation was effective through June 30, 2021, but was extended during the 2021 session until June 30, 2023. During the 2023 Montana Legislative Session, HB 697 was passed, placing the staff back under the Council, providing for quarterly reporting regarding POST's investigations, and requiring an interim study of the POST Council and its staff.

The Council meets four times a year and conducts special committee meetings as necessary. There are six Council committees:

- Curriculum
- Case Status
- Coroner
- Business Plan/Policy
- ARM
- Executive

The Case Status Committee meets every six weeks; the remainder of the committees meet as necessary.

2023 Meetings & Statistics

-  **Council Meetings: 5 meetings**
-  **Case Status Committee: 9 meetings**
-  **Coroner: 1 meeting**
-  **Business Plan/Policy Committee: 1 meeting**
-  **ARM Committee: 2 meetings**

POST staff consist of an Executive Director, Paralegal/Investigator, Compliance Investigator, Executive Assistant, and an Administrative Assistant.



Left to right:

Katrina Bolger, Tina Cranmer,
Timothy Allred, Chad McFadden,
Brooke Standish

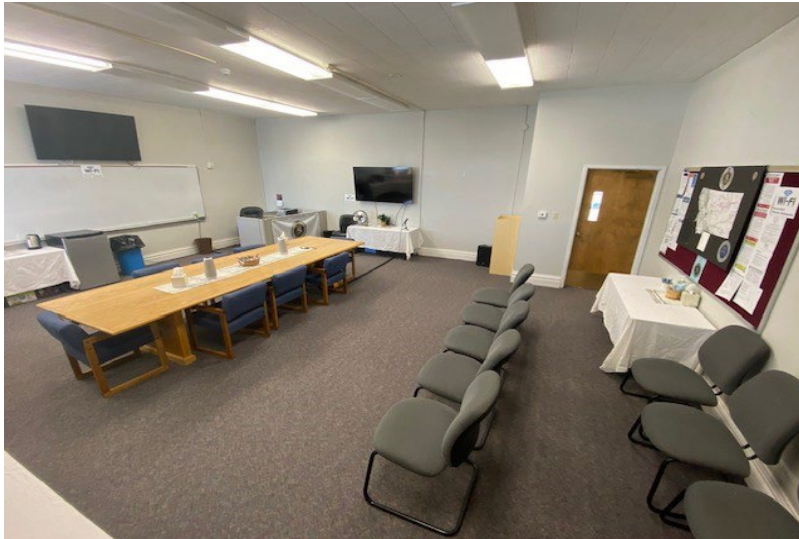
Chad McFadden joined the POST team in October 2023, as a Compliance Investigator. He has many years of service as a Public Safety Officer. Chad worked as a reserve officer, dispatcher, detention officer, and as a deputy. He retired at the rank of Captain after 25 years working for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

Staff process a heavy caseload of training records, allegations, and certifications while remaining responsive to the POST Council and stakeholders.

2023 has brought many exciting changes and updates for POST and Public Safety Officers in the state of Montana.

- Video conference room set-up for meetings/hearings
- Modified compliance investigator approved and hired
- Montana POST became the 37th state to approve National Certification Program (NCP)
- Established a budget 44-10-204
- Updated POST's Information & Resource Guide (PIRG)
- Updated POST's website
- POST's Business Plan
- Updated POST's ARMs
- Updated all forms
- Created an Executive Committee
- Request for Information Policy approved

Video conferencing saves time and resourced by making it more convenient for business purposes for the staff and Council members.



Staff are digitally archiving active officer files, training, and certificates to reduce paperwork. POST is striving to become paperless by conducting business through email and electronic storage.

Staff present a 1-to-1.5-hour training to every basic academy class, except for Coroner Basic. Staff addressed 15 classes of 434 students from Law Enforcement, Correction/Detention, Probation & Parole, and Public Safety Communicator Basics. In addition, POST gives a briefing at the legal equivalency for peace officers and correction/detention officers. The presentation explains the laws that govern POST, the relationship between the officer and the Council, noting that the POST certificates issued belong to the Council which allows officers to work in public safety. The students are also advised of the difference between employer discipline and POST sanctions on their certificates. The goal of these presentations is to convey the importance of protecting their communities with integrity and abiding by the code of ethics adopted by the POST Council.

POST plays a critical role in ensuring that public safety officers in Montana are properly trained and certified. Through the development of minimum training standards and certification processes, and with the support of public safety agencies, POST helps to ensure that public safety officers can effectively serve their communities, while upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethics.

Introduction

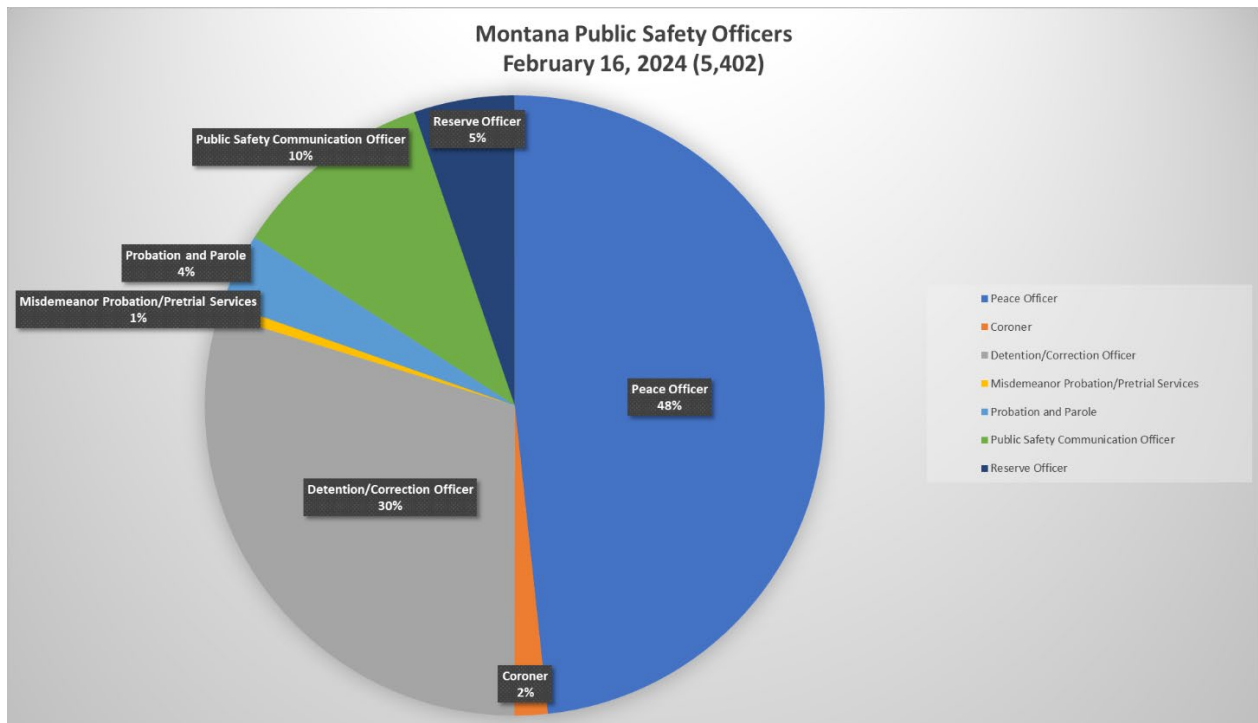
POST creates and maintains records of every public safety officer's employment, training, certification, education, and complaints. During its regularly scheduled, quarterly Council meetings, POST staff provide the Council with a "snapshot" of the number of extension requests, equivalency requests, training courses approved, and certificates issued. The Council also receives a report from the Case Status Committee on allegations received, investigations open, and case closures. POST staff also provide a more in-depth annual report of data to the Council each year, and the same report is available on POST's website. This helps the Council oversee the day-to-day operations and its staff's activities, along with providing necessary transparency for public safety officers and members of the public.

POST's records regarding officers' employment, training, certification, education, and complaints are also maintained in the form of an officer's POST transcript. In 2023, POST staff sent out **1,233** individual officers' transcripts in response to requests from prospective employers, investigators, agencies, and individuals.

Public Safety Officers

Public safety officers are defined in § 44-4-401, MCA, and they include peace officers, coroners, detention officers, corrections officers, public safety communications officers, probation and parole officers, misdemeanor probation officers, pretrial service officers, and reserve officers. POST maintains records of all active public safety officers in the State of Montana.

Public Safety Officers in the State of Montana 2024	
Coroners	93
Detention/Corrections Officers	1,606
Misdemeanor Probation/Pretrial Services	34
Peace Officers	2,609
Probation and Parole	202
Public Safety Communicators	574
Reserve Officers	284
Total	5,402



Certification

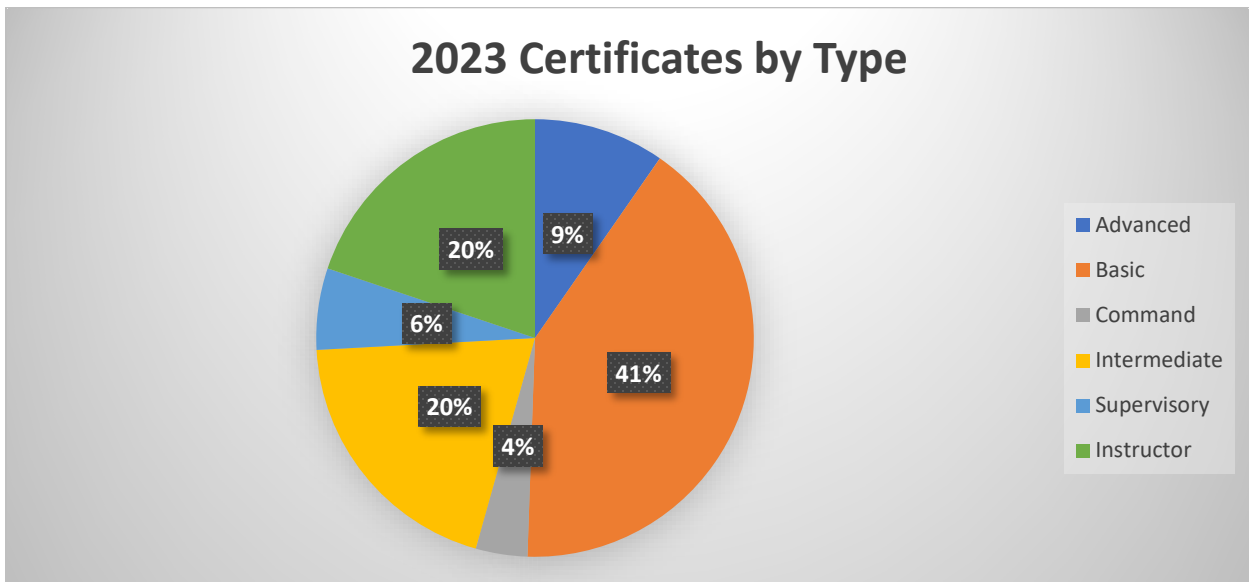
All public safety officers must be certified or eligible for certification. POST issues Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Supervisory, Command, and Instructor certificates to public safety officers in the State of Montana. Each certificate type has specific training and experience requirements. Certificates are issued for the purpose of promoting ethical behavior, professionalism, education, skill, and experience necessary to perform the duties of a public safety officer. All POST certificates remain the property of the POST Council.

POST has seen consistent growth in the number of certificates it issues each year.

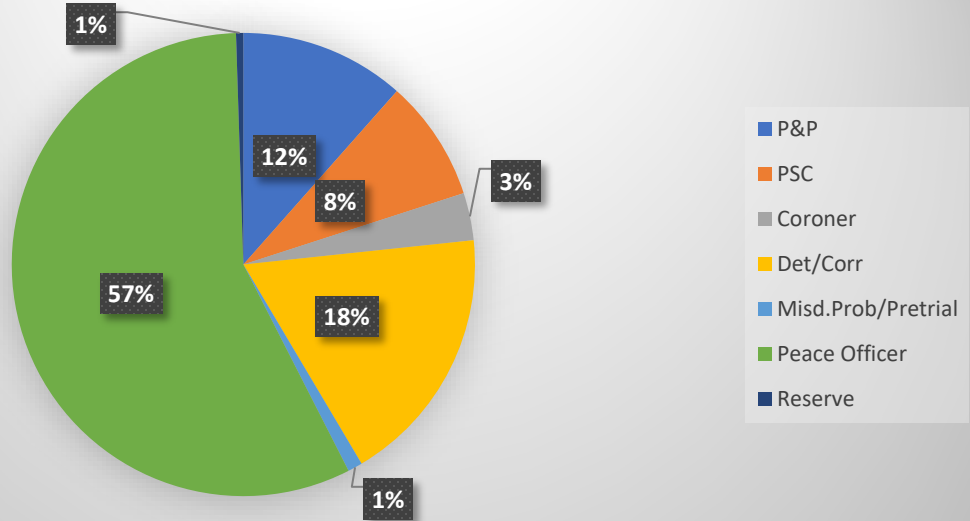


The POST Council issued a total of **1,179** certificates in 2023.

2023 Certificates by Type	
Basic	482
Intermediate	233
Advanced	114
Supervisory	71
Command	45
Instructor	234
Total	1,179



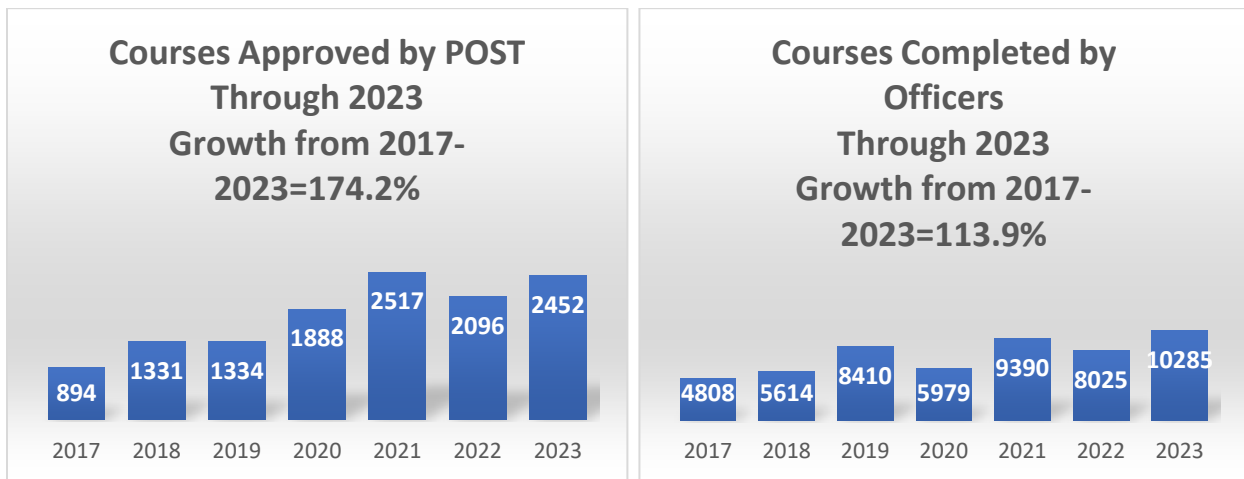
2023 Certificates by Discipline



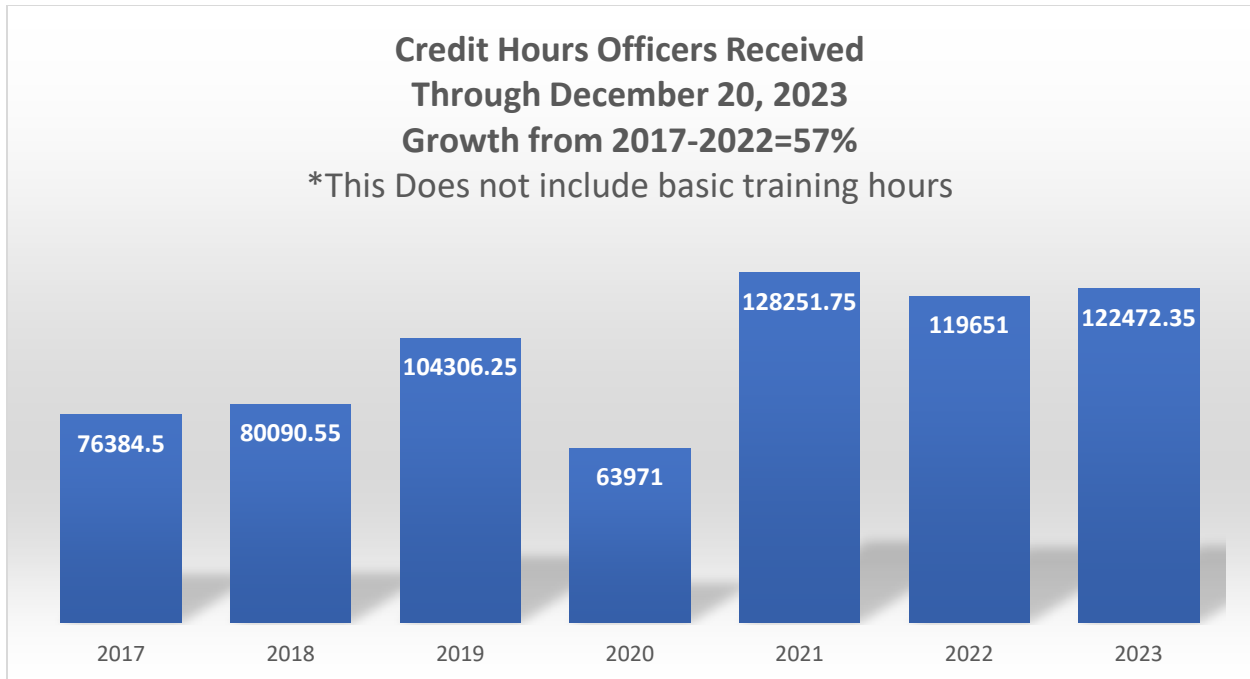
Training

POST provides POST Training Credit Hours for non-basic courses that meet the minimum standards established by the POST Council. POST continues to see growth in the number of training courses it approves each year.

In 2023, POST approved **2,452 courses** for POST Training Credit Hours. POST recorded **10,285 completed** POST-approved courses.



In 2023, Montana's public safety officers earned **a total of 124,948.85** POST Training Credit Hours.



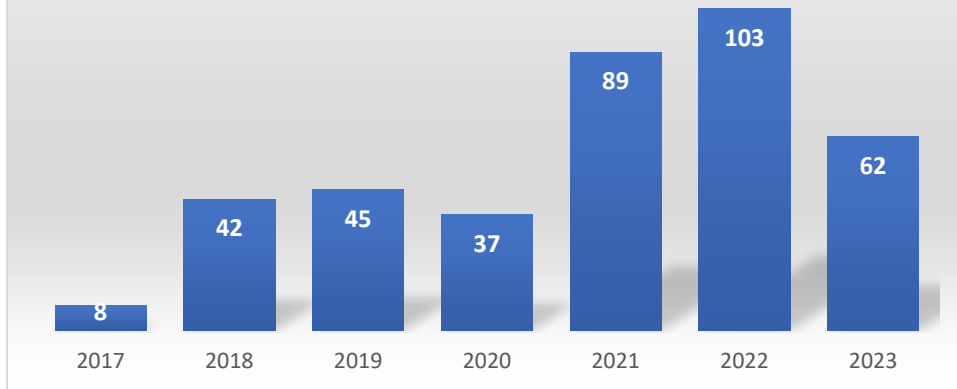
Equivalency Requests

When peace officers or a detention/corrections officers come to work in Montana, and they have already attended a basic academy, their employing authority may request equivalency from POST. Upon receipt of a Basic Equivalency Request, POST staff conducts an investigation of the officer's training, employment, and ethical background. Upon approval of an equivalency request, a peace officer may attend a one-week legal equivalency course in lieu of the full academy. A detention/corrections officer receives study materials and must pass the final examination that Montana officers take. If an officer successfully completes equivalency, he or she will become eligible for POST certification upon completion of the legally-required probationary period.

POST has seen a great deal of growth in the number of equivalency requests that it processes each year.

Equivalency Requests Through 2023

Growth from 2017-2023=675%



Complaints and Investigations

The POST Council has been entrusted with the authority to sanction officer certification in § 44-4-403, MCA. If an officer's certification is revoked by POST, the officer may no longer work as a public safety officer in the State of Montana. Any individual may submit a complaint to POST. Every complaint must first be reviewed by the appointing authority before POST will conduct an investigation of any allegation. POST has seen an increase in complaints and investigations.

