Law Enforcement Technology Program

Student Handbook

2026-2027

Approved by Cabinet

July 2026

WESTERN DAKOTA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Message from the Program Director

On behalf of the Law Enforcement Technology and Criminal Justice instructors, I would like to welcome you to Western Dakota Technical College's Law Enforcement Technology program.

Effective September 1, 2024, the South Dakota Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Training Commission on behalf of the South Dakota Attorney General's Office, Division of Criminal Investigation, Office of Law Enforcement Training, and Western Dakota Technical College entered into an Articulation Agreement to define and set the conditions under which graduates of the Associate of Applied Science in Law Enforcement Technology may seek and obtain certification as a South Dakota law enforcement officer.

The Commission has declared Western Dakota Technical College's Law Enforcement Technology training curricula as "equivalent in content and quality" to the South Dakota Basic Law Enforcement Certification Course and agreed to grant reciprocity law enforcement officer certification testing privileges to eligible students of this program.

Over the next two years, you will receive instruction designed to meet the requirements that you must successfully complete for certification as a police officer in South Dakota. During the fourth and final semester of the Law Enforcement Technology degree curriculum, you will participate in the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) Course where you will receive instruction that meets or exceeds the terminal learning objectives of the South Dakota Basic Law Enforcement Certification Course delivered at the state law enforcement training academy in Pierre. At the conclusion of BLET, you will participate in reciprocity testing with the state of South Dakota and upon graduation and hiring with a law enforcement agency, may seek and obtain certification as a South Dakota law enforcement officer.

Our goal is to see you successfully complete the degree program and the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course and pass reciprocity testing with the State of South Dakota. The instructors are dedicated to this endeavor and will make every effort to ensure that you receive any assistance needed to achieve this end. The specialized training that you will receive will be the beginning of your law enforcement career. You are encouraged to take full advantage of the training opportunities offered to you in a productive and meaningful way, so your educational experience is reflective of your desire to serve this most honorable profession.

Strive to exceed those who traveled this path before you and set the example for those who come after you. Always keep your honor, integrity, and love of service forefront in your mission to help those in need.

Best wishes,

Jonni Joyce
Program Director

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Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Training Act

The Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Training Act contained in SDCL23-3 became effective October 1, 1971. The Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Training Commission was created and given the power to promulgate rules, require submission of reports by law enforcement agencies, establish minimum curriculum, approve training programs, and perform other administrative functions. The commission was also given the power to administer grants, establish training programs, reimburse expenses to officers, and set qualification for law enforcement officers.

The Commission has declared Western Dakota Technical College's training curricula as "equivalent in content and quality" to the South Dakota Basic Law Enforcement Certification Course and agreed to grant reciprocity law enforcement officer certification testing privileges to eligible students of this program.

Ethics Statement

The Law Enforcement Technology Program advocates a strong standard of ethical conduct by students who attend Western Dakota Technical College. Your conduct not only reflects on you, but also upon the profession you have chosen to enter. Your conduct should never betray your integrity, character, or the public's trust. You must have courage to hold yourself accountable for your choices and actions as well as holding your classmates accountable for their actions.

The program has adopted the International Association of Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Code of Ethics as the model for student conduct.

Mission Statement of Western Dakota Technical College

Western Dakota Technical College prepares students to be highly skilled professionals through accessible, career-focused programs to improve their lives, while adapting to community workforce needs and positively impact our economy.

Mission Statement of Law Enforcement Technology Program

The Law Enforcement Technology program prepares students to be employed in their community as law enforcement officers by providing skills-based training specific to the requirements needed to successfully complete certification as a police officer in South Dakota.

International Association of Chiefs of Police

Law Enforcement Code of Ethics

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation,
and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession… law enforcement.

Program Requirements

Admission to Law Enforcement Technology Degree Program – Students are encouraged to enroll in the Law Enforcement Technology Program for a Fall semester entrance. Acceptance will be granted upon successful completion of a criminal history background check beginning in March for an August start date.

Criminal History Check –Students applying to attend the Law Enforcement Technology Program must complete a criminal background check prior to admission into the program. Felony convictions, serious misdemeanor convictions, domestic violence convictions, or domestic violence orders will preclude the student from being accepted to the Law Enforcement Technology degree program. Once admitted to the Law Enforcement Technology program and prior to attending the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course, the student must pass a driver's history check. A driving history that is deemed extensive or uninsurable will preclude the student from being able to attend Emergency Vehicle Operations courses and complete the degree program. Any student who receives a traffic citation or is arrested after being admitted to the Law Enforcement Technology Program must, without unnecessary delay, report that to the Program Director.

Driver's License – All students in the Law enforcement Technology Program are required to maintain a valid driver's license. You will be required to present your valid driver's license at any time upon the request of an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course instructor or Program Director. You will be suspended and/or removed from the Law Enforcement Technology program if your driver's license is suspended, revoked, or otherwise taken from you during enrollment in the Law Enforcement Technology degree program.

Medical Clearance for Fitness Participation – All second year law enforcement technology students will participate in physical fitness training, firearms training, and emergency vehicle operations training. Each student must provide a completed Medical Verification of Physical Ability form signed by an examining physician prior to participating in fitness training, firearms training, and emergency vehicle operations training. The program director shall provide the students with the appropriate form. Students who wear glasses or contacts to correct vision are required to maintain updated prescription glasses or contacts. Any student who appears to have vision issues will be required to have a medical verification signed by their eye doctor.

Satisfactory Drug Testing – Law Enforcement Technology students may be required to complete and pass a satisfactory drug screen test during attendance in the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course. Students may be asked to submit to alcohol and/or drug testing if an instructor has reason to believe that a student is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Refusal to submit to the test may be grounds for suspension and/or removal from the Law Enforcement Technology program. Any drug and alcohol concerns resulting in a Code of Conduct violation will be immediately forwarded to the Director of Student Success for handling and final resolution. ***To qualify to take the reciprocity test to become a law enforcement officer in the state of South Dakota, the applicant cannot have unlawfully used any prescribed drug, controlled substance, or marijuana within one year of testing.***

Law Enforcement Code of Ethics – All students must demonstrate an understanding of and willingness to comply with the program's ethical standards. Students are expected to maintain the highest code of professional conduct and not violate any state laws or WDTC policies, rules, and regulations. Students are required to self-report violations and have a duty to report violations of classmates. Ethical breaches will be managed through the Code of Conduct violation process. Any dishonesty will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Professionalism - Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the professional standards and expectations of law enforcement officers at all times. Law enforcement professionals are expected to exhibit tolerance for the concerns, opinions and backgrounds of others. They are to treat all people with respect, dignity, and courtesy regardless of their circumstances or condition. Students shall not participate in hazing or any activities that are unsafe or demeaning toward others. The use of degrading language or actions toward others is unacceptable and prohibited. Law Enforcement Technology students will self-monitor and regulate their own behavior and actions at all times in accordance with the standards of this handbook.

Law Enforcement Technology Course Requirements

Students in the Law Enforcement Technology Program will take Criminal Justice and General Education courses in their first year of enrollment. Law Enforcement Technology (LET) classes that are specific to the law enforcement technology degree begin in the fall semester of the second year of enrollment and include physical fitness training, emergency vehicle operations, and firearms training. Students must successfully complete their first-year criminal justice classes in order to be enrolled in the second year LET classes. The Basic Law Enforcement Training Course and the Reciprocity Testing Review Course are only given in the spring semester and require successful completion of ALL courses in the student's first three semesters as a prerequisite.

Uniforms – All students enrolled in the Law Enforcement Technology Program will be required to wear a standardized utility uniform issued to the student beginning the fall semester of their second year of enrollment. The uniform will consist of a designated blue polo-style shirt with WDTC law enforcement insignia and tan BDU-style pants with a black belt. Pants will be hemmed to an appropriate length. Students shall maintain their uniforms in a serviceable condition and will be subject to routine uniform inspections. A visible student ID should be worn above the waist in conjunction with this uniform. Students will receive routine uniform inspections conducted by the class leader, Program Director, or invited guest.

Students may wear a dark blue or black, short or long sleeve collarless shirt under the issued polo. A dark blue or black crewneck sweatshirt without writing or logo may be worn over the issued polo.

Students are not allowed to wear caps or hats while in uniform except when directed by staff.

Footwear – Students will be required to furnish their own industry accepted footwear as part of the LET uniform. Footwear must be black in color. Footwear may be uniform boots or shoes. Some suggested brands are Magnum, Bates, Rocky and Danner, but others will work as well. Solid black athletic shoes that can be utilized in uniform and during physical training are allowed.

Appearance and Grooming Standards – WDTC Law Enforcement Technology students will maintain proper professional grooming while enrolled in the program. The program uniform must be kept clean, pressed and in proper readiness condition. When in the Basic Law Enforcement Training class, uniform hair will be kept neat, conservative and must present a professional business-like appearance. Hair may be dyed but shall be of natural colors which appear on a human. Long hair should not be loose to the extent it becomes hazardous or detracts from a professional appearance. When in uniform, facial hair must be neatly trimmed and students should avoid an unshaven appearance. Eccentric or faddish hairstyles that do not present a professional appearance are not acceptable. WDTC Law Enforcement Instructional Staff will determine the appropriateness of hairstyles and grooming if in question.

Proper personal hygiene is a must. Embarrassing breath or offensive body odor is prohibited when in class or at a WDTC Law Enforcement Technology function or event. Perfumes or colognes are prohibited during class or in training. Nails should be clean and kept trimmed to a safe length. Body piercing, tongue studs, nose rings and facial piercings are not allowed while in the WDTC Law Enforcement Uniform.

Liability Forms – Due to the law enforcement procedures taught and the participation requirements of the fitness program and practical exercises, students are required to sign release of liability forms. These forms provide the student with a detailed description of the required experiences, student responsibilities, and release of liability to the institution and instructors.

Illness or Injury - Should a student become injured or ill, it will be the responsibility of the student to make a report to an instructor or staff member as soon as possible. The student will complete any relevant forms and, if necessary, will be referred to an authorized doctor or medical facility. All injuries must be reported immediately, even if medical attention is not necessary at the time. WDTC will not be responsible for any medical charges incurred to the student. Refer to the WDTC Student Handbook for further details.

Health Insurance – Health insurance is not required as part of the Basic Law Enforcement Training class. However, due to the nature of the training and physical work involved, law enforcement students are strongly encouraged to have health insurance coverage. In the event of a campus-related injury, neither WDTC, Faculty, Staff or designated lab assistants may be held liable. Students are referred to page 40 of the WDTC Student Handbook under “Illness, Accident or Injury” in the event of an on-campus injury.

Basic Law Enforcement Training Course and Reciprocity Testing Review
Spring Semester
2027

The Basic Law Enforcement Training course and the Reciprocity Testing Review course are given in the spring semester of the second year of the two-year program study after the student has successfully completed all prior required course work of the previous semesters. This training course is unique in delivery as it is based upon the Basic Law Enforcement Certification Course (the police academy) delivered in Pierre, S.D. and utilizes the same training material and module format as the state police academy.

Class Days and Hours – Class days are Monday through Thursday. Friday is a voluntary study day where students may, on their own, utilize the Law Enforcement Technology classroom to meet and study. On occasion, students may be required to attend additional evening and weekend activities. Students will be notified in advance regarding any schedule changes or special arrangements. All dates and times of classes will be posted in the course schedules. All written testing will be conducted on Monday unless announced by the program director.

Emergency Vehicle Operations Course – The forty-hour module of EVOC training given during the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course will be instructed by state law enforcement instructors at the EVOC training pad of the Law Enforcement Training Academy in Pierre, S.D. Students will be housed in dorms on the state campus, must comply with all campus rules, and will be responsible for purchasing their meals during the training.

Slow speed skills training will take place at WDTC in the fall semester as a stand-alone EVOC course and will prepare students to enter into the spring semester instruction. Students will be required to clean and maintain the law enforcement vehicles.

Firearms Training – The firearms training course will be held at the Public Safety Center in downtown, Rapid City on Thursday night from 1700-2100 in both the fall and spring semesters or at any of the other designated ranges used by WDTC. Students must wear personal protective equipment while shooting at the firearms range including a baseball cap, crew neck t-shirt, ear protection, and eye protection.

Transportation – Transportation and lodging are the responsibility of the student while enrolled in the Law Enforcement Technology program. If driving, proof of insurance, registration and a valid driver's license is required for access to various off campus training sites to include law enforcement agencies and military installations.

Physical Training - Fitness training is an integral part of law enforcement training. Participation in the physical fitness training class and module is mandatory. Physical fitness training begins in the fall semester of the second year of the curriculum and continues through the Basic Law Enforcement Training course. Students will receive an individual workout plan that includes guidance in nutrition, strength training, and aerobic workouts. Participation in the fitness program

will require athletic clothing and footwear suitable for indoor and outdoor activities. You will be required to provide running shoes and physical fitness clothing at your own expense. Students will use the law enforcement training fitness gym during physical training class. This facility is equipped with cardiovascular, endurance, muscle tone and strength-building equipment. Students also have access to locker rooms with showers. Students may use a lock on a locker in the locker room when storing personal belongings. Students will be required to clean and maintain the law enforcement training fitness gym.

Attendance – Attendance at the Basic Law Enforcement Training course is mandatory. Students are expected to attend all instructional hours of the program, learning labs and/or practicums. Any missed time must be authorized by the Program Director ahead of the absence. Students missing any hours of class time outside of these parameters are subject to being removed from the program.

Classrooms – No food is allowed in the classrooms unless given instructor approval. Beverages are allowed but must be in a spill-proof container. Cell phones must be kept on silent and in a pocket or backpack. Phones may only be checked during official breaks from classroom instruction. The instructor may ban the use of phones at any time for improper cell phone use. Students will be required to clean and maintain the law enforcement technology classroom.

Testing and Examinations – Students will be required to pass all written academic tests, skill evaluations, and various other written assignments to successfully complete the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course. Test will be given on Mondays and will include multiple modules of instruction.

The passing score for a module test is 80%. If a student fails, they will be given seven (7) calendar days to retake the test. If the test is failed a second time, the student will be dismissed from the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course.

The passing score for a skills-based or scenario test is 80%. If a student fails, they will be given seven (7) calendar days to retake the test. If the test is failed a second time, the student will be dismissed from the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course.

A student will be given three attempts at passing the EVOC skills testing with an 80% and the Firearms qualification at 80%. Any student who fails all three attempts to qualify either EVOC or Firearms will be dismissed from the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course.

A student may withdraw from the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course pursuant to the withdrawal policies of WDTC, and in lieu of dismissal. A withdraw in good standing will afford the student eligibility to reapply for readmission to the Basic Law Enforcement Training course at a later date, if desired.

Remedial Training - Remedial training may be requested by those students who do not successfully pass a module or learning lab during the initial examination. Remedial training may consist of individualized instruction, lecture, hands-on demonstration, written projects or any other reasonable means of instruction. Remedial training may not be requested after the retake period or three failures in EVOC or Firearms.

Student Removal Procedures - Any instructor has the authority to remove disruptive students, non-participating students, or those whose actions detract from the learning environment. Any instructor has the authority to remove a student from an exercise if they determine the student is unable to participate for behavioral, medical or safety reasons. The instructor shall notify and document the activity in a written report to the Program Director.

Dismissal Policy - Violation of any of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics or any policies and procedures of the WDTC Student Handbook, may be considered grounds for dismissal. Given the nature of the law enforcement profession, continued intentional association with the criminal element may be grounds for dismissal. Students may be counselled to withdraw or be subject to dismissal from the program if a student is continually poorly prepared, lacks basic academic ability or lacks a demonstrated ability to continue with the program. A student who neglects course studies, is excessively tardy or by virtue of attitude or demeanor is determined to be a negative influence on other class members, may be counseled to withdraw or be subject to dismissal. Please refer to the WDTC Student Handbook for additional information.

Reciprocity Testing – The written reciprocity test will be administered to eligible students by an authorized designee of the state of South Dakota on a date during the first week of May at WDTC. Eligible students must receive a minimum score or 70% on the written test to proceed with the reciprocity certification process that includes proficiency testing in emergency vehicle operations, use of force/response to resistance, and firearms at the Law Enforcement Training Center in Pierre, S.D. Eligible students must meet the same proficiency standards as required of officers attending the South Dakota Basic Law Enforcement Certification Course administered by Law Enforcement Training in Pierre, S.D. An eligible student who successfully completes all testing and is otherwise compliant with minimum standards will be deemed certifiable by the Law Enforcement Standards and Training Commission.

Awards – The following awards may be issued to deserving law enforcement technology students who successfully complete the Law Enforcement Degree requirements and reciprocity testing with the State of South Dakota:

Top Gun Award – is awarded to the student who demonstrates great skill on the firearms range and who is an example to fellow students in safety and leadership in firearms training. Qualification scores and input from instructors will determine the recipient.

Honor Graduate – is awarded to the student who demonstrates academic achievement, leadership ability, and physical fitness. Academic scores and input from instructors will determine the recipient.

Above and Beyond – is awarded to the student who inspires their classmates towards personal achievement by maintaining morale, encouraging teamwork, and demonstrating a never give up attitude that is contagious among their peers. This individual is selected by a voting process of class peers and input from instructors.

President's Award for Grit – may be awarded at the discretion of the President.

Graduation – A special graduation ceremony for graduating students of the Law Enforcement Technology Program will be held the last day of classes on the Friday before the Saturday WDTC graduation ceremony. Students are required to wear the WDTC LET uniform or, if hired by an agency, may wear their agency uniform. Students may also elect to wear a business suit with jacket replacing the WDTC LET uniform.

Withdraw Policy

A student may withdraw from the Basic Law Enforcement Training Course pursuant to the withdrawal policies of WDTC. A withdraw in good standing will afford the student eligibility to reapply for readmission to the Basic Law Enforcement Training course at a later date, if desired. A student who is dismissed for cause due to a violation of policy or the code of ethics will not be readmitted to the Basic Law Enforcement Training class.

Western Dakota Technical College
Law Enforcement Technology Program
Student Handbook

I have received a copy of the Law Enforcement Technology Program Handbook. By signing below, I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the program.

Printed Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Please return the signed form to the LET Program Director