



Reserve Peace Officers in California Roles and Classification

Overview

Reserve peace officers in California are sworn law enforcement professionals who serve on a part-time or volunteer basis with municipal police departments, county sheriff's offices, and select state agencies. They are appointed under state law and must meet standards set by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

Reserve officers are sworn peace officers with defined law enforcement authority while on duty. Depending on classification, they may patrol, respond to calls, assist with investigations, provide traffic control, and support major incidents or community events. All levels wear the same uniform and badge as full-time officers, exercise law enforcement authority while on duty, and are held to the same legal and ethical standards.

Levels

- **Level I:** Highest reserve classification. Officers have completed training equivalent to that of a full-time academy graduate. They may work alone and perform the full range of peace officer duties, subject to department policy.
 - **Level II:** Completed substantial POST-certified training but not the full Regular Basic Course. Must work under the immediate supervision of a full-time peace officer and may perform general law enforcement duties while supervised.
 - **Level III:** Assigned duties not likely to result in physical arrests. Typically serve in support roles and must be supervised in the accessible vicinity by a Level I reserve officer or full-time officer. May transport prisoners without immediate supervision.
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Training Requirements

Reserve officers complete training through California's POST-certified modular academy system. The Regular Basic Course is divided into Module III, Module II, and Module I.

After completing all modules and meeting POST requirements, the training standard is equivalent to that of a full-time academy graduate.

Instruction includes criminal law, patrol procedures, firearms, defensive tactics, emergency vehicle operations, report writing, and scenario-based training. Reserve officers must complete ongoing professional training to remain compliant with POST standards.

All reserve officers undergo background investigations, psychological screening, medical evaluation, and field training. They take an oath of office and are accountable to departmental policy and state law.