

12-9-106. Selection and training requirements -- Exceptions.

(a) (1) The Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training shall provide by rule that a person shall not be appointed as a law enforcement officer, except on a temporary basis not to exceed one (1) year, unless the person has satisfactorily completed a preparatory program of police training at a school approved by the commission.

(2) (A) A law enforcement officer who lacks the education and training qualifications or background investigation required by the commission shall not have his or her temporary employment extended beyond one (1) year, by renewal of appointment or otherwise, unless extraordinary circumstances exist in the majority opinion of the executive body of the commission.

(B) If the executive body of the commission determines under subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section that extraordinary circumstances exist, the commission may approve an extension of temporary employment for no more than an eight-month period.

(b) (1) In addition to the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and § 12-9-104(7), the commission, by rules and regulations, shall fix such other qualifications as it deems necessary.

(2) However, no person who pleads or is found guilty of a felony shall be eligible to be appointed or certified as a law enforcement officer.

(c) The commission shall issue a certificate evidencing satisfaction of the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section to any applicant who presents such evidence as may be required by its rules and regulations of satisfactory completion of a program or course of instruction in this or another state conforming to the content and quality required by the commission for approved education and training.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude any employing agency from establishing qualifications and standards for hiring, training, compensating, or promoting law enforcement officers that exceed those set by the commission.

(e) (1) Law enforcement officers already serving under full-time permanent appointment on December 31, 1977, shall not be required to meet the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section as a condition of tenure or continued employment, nor shall failure of any such law enforcement officer to fulfill the requirements make him or her ineligible.

(2) Law enforcement officers employed prior to January 1, 1976, may continue their employment and participate in training programs on a voluntary or assigned basis, but failure to meet standards shall not be grounds for their dismissal or termination of employment. Subsequent termination of employment, whether voluntary or involuntary, shall not result in revocation of this exclusion status but such officers shall have the same powers, privileges, and rights and shall be subject to the same rules and restrictions as are applicable to officers whose certification is based on formal training.

(3) Personnel of law enforcement agencies whose status as to coverage under this subchapter is questionable on December 31, 1977, but who are subsequently determined to be subject thereto, shall have an effective date of compliance enforcement as set by the commission, and personnel employed prior to that date shall be excluded from mandatory compliance therewith.