



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**MPTC**

**Municipal Police Training Committee**



Norman Rockwell, "Freedom of Speech" (1943)

# *The First Amendment*

2025

## **IN-SERVICE SYLLABUS**

The Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC), an agency of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), serves the Commonwealth by establishing training standards, oversight, and policy guidance for policing professionals.

## Overview

The poet John Milton once wrote, “The liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience [is] above all liberties.”<sup>1</sup> Later, when the Bill of Rights was being drafted, some believed the freedom of assembly should be omitted from the proposed First Amendment because it was too trivial. Advocates responded that without the freedom of assembly, every other right in the Bill of Rights could be taken away.<sup>2</sup>

The 2025 In-Service theme is “**The First Amendment.**” The course offerings review not only the scope of the freedoms of speech, assembly, and expression but also their exceptions and, ultimately, how police officers may carry out their duties in ways that balance these fundamental rights with public safety. These courses include topics “ripped from the headlines” and include First Amendment auditors, sovereign citizens, hate crimes and groups, mass gatherings, protests and counterprotests, and crowd management.

Thank you to the officers who answered the call for topics. This year's offering was assembled from their top survey choices and other statutory requirements.

## Courses

### Freedom of Speech [3 hours]

*Authors: Sergeant James DeFeo, Boston Police Department  
Steven Cromack, MPTC Curriculum & Instruction Specialist*

#### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the scope of First Amendment protections.
2. Evaluate First Amendment protections and their relevance to criminal law and police procedure.
3. Assess sovereign citizen ideology, tactics, and best practices during police encounters.

### Freedom and Hate: Speech, Crimes, and Groups [3 hours]

*Authors: Trooper Emily Todisco, Massachusetts State Police HART Unit  
Hannah Gianfriddo, MTPC Curriculum Specialist*

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<sup>1</sup> Milton, J. (1644). *Areopagitica*. In William Haller (Ed.), *Areopagitica and other prose writings by John Milton*. Macmillan. (1927).

<sup>2</sup> Monk, L. (2015). *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. Stonesong Press.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Evaluate the limitations and protections of the First Amendment when differentiating free speech from hate speech using prevalent case law.
2. Review current hate crimes data, prevalent hate crimes statutes, and relevant terminology.
3. Identify the attributes of hate groups and movements currently active in Massachusetts.
4. Discuss the current resources made available to Massachusetts police officers and victims when investigating hate crimes.

### **Use of Force [3 hours]**

*Authors: Officer Charles DiChiara, MPTC Defensive Tactics Statewide Coordinator  
Denise S. Flagg, MPTC Curriculum Division Manager*

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the “reverence for human life” ethic and the priority of life during a police encounter.
2. Describe various de-escalation tactics and principles officers can use to stabilize a situation when feasible.
3. Discuss the legal precedents that govern when officers can lawfully use force.
4. Compare and contrast non-deadly and deadly force and the limitations and prohibited uses of both.
5. Define the “totality of the circumstances” and assess the relationship between the perceived circumstances, subject actions, and reasonable officer response.
6. Explain officer requirements following a use of force:
  - a. render critical care
  - b. duty to intervene
  - c. report and reporting requirements

## **Freedom of Assembly: Crowd Management [3 hours]**

*Authors: Sergeant Paul Sicard, Westwood Police Department (Ret.)  
Steven Cromack, MPTC Curriculum & Instruction Specialist*

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the dynamics of protests, social movements, and gatherings.
2. Identify police responsibilities and best practices for responding to mass gatherings.
3. Evaluate how to preserve the right to assemble while maintaining public safety.

## **Legal Update [6 hours]**

*Authors: Denise S. Flagg, MPTC Curriculum Division Manager*

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the latest changes in case law regarding the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments and general criminal and motor vehicle laws.
2. Evaluate and explain how to apply these changes to current policing practices.

## **Unload Your Backpack (Officer Wellness) [3 hours]**

*Authors: Sgt. Sean Peterson, Taunton Police Department*

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the effects of trauma and chronic stress on the officer's brain.
2. Examine maladaptive behaviors seen at roll call, on the street, and at home.
3. Assess key elements of identity and self-assess well-being.
4. Appraise tangible wellness practices and tools to mitigate common pitfalls of the profession.

5. Formulate how to elicit meaningful discussion with officers and organizational leadership.

## **Freedom to Communicate: Deaf/Hard of Hearing & Victims of Human Trafficking [3 hours]**

*Authors: Jonathan O'Dell, MCDHH  
Zoe RajBhandary, MCDHH  
Jennifer Snook, Attorney General's Office  
Hannah Gianfriddo, MPTC Curriculum Specialist*

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify best practices of effective communication as well as common barriers to communication with vulnerable populations.
2. Describe and explain the best practices and resources available when communicating with Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.
3. Review the best practices and available resources when communicating with victims of human trafficking.

## **Timeline**

Instructor training for the various classes will occur between **June and September 13, 2024**. In-person, In-Service classes at the academies will begin the week of **September 16, 2024**. The online offerings will be released as they become available.

In-service classes will run through May or June 2025, depending on the academy, and must be completed by June 30, 2025. Departments will have until September 30, 2025, to enter in-house training into ACADIS (CPR/First Responder, Firearms Requalification, or ECW).

## **Delivery Option**

Departments will be able to choose the following delivery methods of TY 2025 In-Service:

1. In-person (in-house or at an MPTC-operated academy)
2. Online through ACADIS
3. A hybrid of the two

**More information and instructions regarding how departments can sign up for In-Service training is attached.**

Officers assigned the online versions must be completed individually by each officer.

## Delivery Sequence

Due to the thematic arc of this year’s content, the following courses need to be paired together and scheduled on the same day:

1. Freedom of Speech and Freedom and Hate: Speech, Crimes and Groups
2. Use of Force and Freedom of Assembly: Crowd Management
3. Unload Your Backpack (Officer Wellness) and Freedom to Communicate: Deaf/Hard of Hearing & Victims of Human Trafficking

Regarding the course sequence, the Freedom of Speech and Freedom and Hate: Speech, Crimes, and Groups training must be delivered BEFORE the Use of Force and Freedom of Assembly: Crowd Management courses. All other scheduling is left to the discretion of the Program Coordinator.

## Hours

Effective July 1, 2021, M.G.L. 6, § 116 reads in pertinent part that the MPTC Committee: “...shall identify training requirements and develop guidance for meeting those requirements through trainings provided by the committee or other independent educational entities.”

550 CMR 2.07 requires all law enforcement officers to complete 40 hours of In-Service training annually. Based upon the topics approved by Committee vote, the required In-Service training courses for training year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) are:

Freedom of Speech .....	Three (3) hours
Freedom and Hate: Speech, Crimes, and Groups .....	Three (3) hours
Use of Force .....	Three (3) hours
Freedom of Assembly: Crowd Management .....	Three (3) hours
Unload Your Backpack (Officer Wellness) .....	Three (3) hours
Freedom to Communicate: Deaf/Hard of Hearing & Victims of Human Trafficking ..	Three (3) hours
Legal Update .....	Six (6) hours
Annual CPR/FA Requirement (M.G.L. c. 111, § 201) .....	Six (6) hours
Annual Firearms Requalification & Training .....	Eight (8) hours
Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition (ALEC) [Online Only] .....	Two (2) hours
<b>Total Hours:</b>	<b>Forty (40) hours</b>

This year, no local option training must be completed. The Annual CPR Requirement and Firearms Requalification and Training and the online Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition (ALEC) training are counted toward the 40 hours required by the CMRs.

All mandated In-Service training must be an MPTC-approved curriculum taught by MPTC-certified instructors. Mandated courses taught by instructors that are not MPTC-certified when the class is taught will NOT fulfill the In-Service training requirements.

## Other Statutory Training Requirements

### Annual Electronic Control Weapons (ECW) Requalification Requirement:

If officers carry a department-issued ECW, they are required to complete annual training. 501 CMR 8.06(2) requires that “[a]ll authorized officers who have successfully completed the authorized training program pursuant to 501 CMR 8.06(1) must then complete an annual recertification training of no less than four hours consisting of:

- (a) A review of the authorized agency’s use of force policy and other policies and procedures related to electronic control weapons;
- (b) Updates regarding the electronic control weapon;
- (c) Testing to demonstrate knowledge of policies, protocols, use, and effects of electronic control weapons; and
- (d) A demonstration of proficiency with the electronic control weapon.

## Instructor Training

All those who wish to instruct any In-Service class must be certified instructors. This includes departments that offer their own in-house In-Service training. **Any officer who attends an In-Service program not taught by an MPTC-certified instructor will not receive credit for the class.**

After completing the train-the-trainer class, those looking to teach the respective In-Service courses must apply for certification through ACADIS. **All MPTC In-Service instructors must have a minimum of five (5) years of law enforcement experience OR a waiver from the Standards & Delivery Manager.**

When applying for instructor certification for In-Service classes, instructors must have completed the 3-Day Academic Instructor Development or the 6-Day Instructor Development courses except for:

In-Service Course	Prerequisites:
Use of Force	Defensive Tactics OR Firearms Instructor Certification
Freedom of Assembly: Crowd Management	Supervisor with 3-Day Tactical Instructor Development OR Defensive Tactics OR Firearms Instructor Certification

Information about becoming an MPTC-certified instructor is available on our website, [mass.gov/MPTC](http://mass.gov/MPTC).

Any instructor who wishes to teach and get paid by the MPTC must also complete a state contract application.

## Recent Academy Graduates

Any officer graduating from a full-time recruit academy between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, is NOT required to complete training year 2025 In-Service.

## Additional Questions

For any additional questions, please contact your regional academy’s program coordinator:

<b>Academy</b>	<b>Program Coordinator</b>	<b>Email</b>
<i>Boylston</i>	Shannon Carney	<a href="mailto:shannon.e.carney@mass.gov">shannon.e.carney@mass.gov</a>
<i>East Falmouth</i> <i>*opening 12/2024</i>	Alison Taylor	<a href="mailto:alison.taylor@mass.gov">alison.taylor@mass.gov</a>
<i>Haverhill (NECC)</i>	Laura Nichols	<a href="mailto:laura.nichols@mass.gov">laura.nichols@mass.gov</a>
<i>Holyoke</i>	TBD	
<i>Lynnfield</i>	Kevin Donnelly	<a href="mailto:kevin.m.donnelly@mass.gov">kevin.m.donnelly@mass.gov</a>
	Crystal Santiago	<a href="mailto:crystal.santiago2@mass.gov">crystal.santiago2@mass.gov</a>
<i>Milford</i>	Kimberly Schwenderman	<a href="mailto:kimberly.p.schwenderman@mass.gov">kimberly.p.schwenderman@mass.gov</a>
<i>Plymouth</i>	Joanne Heres	<a href="mailto:joanne.heres@mass.gov">joanne.heres@mass.gov</a>
<i>Randolph</i>	Lisa Ann Reich	<a href="mailto:lisaann.reich@mass.gov">lisaann.reich@mass.gov</a>
	Noshee Mahmood	<a href="mailto:noshee.mahmood@mass.gov">noshee.mahmood@mass.gov</a>
<i>Southbridge</i> <i>*closing 12/2024</i>	Kimberly Schwenderman	<a href="mailto:kimberly.p.schwenderman@mass.gov">kimberly.p.schwenderman@mass.gov</a>
<i>Taunton</i>	George McNeil	<a href="mailto:george.m.mcneil2@mass.gov">george.m.mcneil2@mass.gov</a>