

# How the Polk County Sheriff's Office develops customized training and ensures accountability with PoliceOne Academy

The custom course tool and electronic signature requirement enable the PCSO to address issues as they arise and track compliance.



## BACKGROUND

The [Polk County Sheriff's Office](#) serves roughly 650,000 residents in central Florida with a force of 725 sworn officers, 350 certified corrections officers and hundreds of support staff. The jurisdiction covers 2,011 square miles between Tampa and Orlando.

## CHALLENGES

Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd wanted to standardize the agency's training by providing short videos to be shown during daily roll call to address high-liability topics such as pursuits, arrests and firearms. The agency initially created its own training system, but developing the videos in house proved a slow and arduous process.

"It was taking us quite some time," said Lt. Eric Rauch, training section administrator, "and I was making sure I got releases on every video, which was delaying our process a little bit more."

Tracking compliance posed another problem. The agency had no reliable way to ensure consistency or account for who had or hadn't viewed a video or completed a training assignment.

## SOLUTION

The Polk County Sheriff's Office began training with [PoliceOne Academy](#) in July 2013. Sheriff Judd emphasizes global training, and the agency signed a contract for the entire county, giving most cities and municipalities in the county access to the PoliceOne Academy platform.

At first, captains chose their own lesson plans, but now the course selections are standardized across the agency. Supervisors lead video training during daily roll call and document who was in attendance electronically. The training video is assigned online to anyone not present at the briefing, and the system acknowledges when each has viewed the required video.

Polk County uses the Academy daily, and their most-used courses include topics such as gangs, active shooter prevention and workplace issues like sexual harassment and cultural awareness. The agency's average cost of training on the PoliceOne Academy platform from July 2016 through June 2017 was less than \$2/hour.

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Officers can access their training assignments from any device, anytime, anywhere. The system provides 100 percent reach and complete accountability, as well as an effective way to document the agency's CALEA accreditation requirement for shift briefing training and other compliance needs.

"It was just a huge game-changer for us," said Rauch. "I can't say enough good about it."

## CUSTOMIZATION

About a year after adopting the PoliceOne Academy platform, Polk County wanted a way to add its own courses to the mix. The custom course tool was launched in September 2015, and now users can create and deploy a course with agency-specific messaging in one day.



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Rauch and his team have created nearly 200 custom courses in less than two years, and the agency produces about five custom courses each month on average. They can also disseminate general orders and procedural memos using the Academy platform, which tracks compliance.

"Definitely we have 100 percent accountability," he said. "Instead of my admin chasing you around to get a signature, you can do it on your phone or from wherever."

## RESULTS

Rauch appreciates the responsive customer service and support from PoliceOne and says the Academy platform is "worth its weight in gold."

For the Polk County Sheriff's Office, the benefits of training with PoliceOne Academy are three-fold:

**First**, the agency can produce tailored training quickly to address hot topics, as well as on-demand access for remedial training and accreditation needs.

Access to on-demand remedial training reduces liability by eliminating delays between an incident and delivering the training to address it. And the county no longer has to schedule accreditation training sessions for reserve or retired officers to keep their standards up, another advantage.


"Each year we'd have to put on a 40-hour block for them," said Rauch. "Now we use PoliceOne for that."

**Second**, more units within the sheriff's office and more municipalities within the county are using the platform for more consistent training throughout the agency and county.

"Our sheriff believes in global training and wants us to train everybody that we possibly can, and we're seeing that we're getting more consistent training across the county," said Rauch.

"It's brought the agencies a little closer together because we're sharing information," he added. "When you start counting all the other agencies that are under our contract, probably 1,500 law enforcement officers in this county benefit from the program."

**Third**, the minimal cost per hour saves the county hundreds of thousands of dollars in potential lost time. At an average cost of less than \$2/hour, Rauch estimates that the training solution saved \$180,000 in manpower alone in 2016.



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## FUTURE PLANS

The Polk County Sheriff's Office is one of PoliceOne Academy's largest users, and Rauch says the agency wants to do even more with the platform.

"There's a million ways we can and do use the system, and we could be doing so much more," he said. "We have some growing that we want to do along with PoliceOne Academy, so our goal is to increase the use of it. I've been doing this for 29 years, and it has been the best change in training that I have ever seen."

**For more information, visit [PoliceOneAcademy.com](https://www.policeoneacademy.com) or call 866.941.4090.**