**ARC 0729D**

# LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY[501]

**Adopted and Filed**

**Rulemaking related to certification of law enforcement and reserve officers**

The Iowa Law Enforcement Academy Council hereby rescinds Chapter 3, "Certification of Law Enforcement Officers," and adopts a new Chapter 3, "Certification of Law Enforcement and Reserve Officers," Iowa Administrative Code.

*Legal Authority for Rulemaking*

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code chapters 17A, 80B and 80D.

*State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapters 80B and 80D.

*Purpose and Summary*

Chapter 3 describes the certification standards and timelines for law enforcement officers and reserve officers, the various pathways to obtain certification and eligibility requirements for each, and the curriculum for each pathway. As part of the Red Tape Review required by Executive Order 10, this chapter was reviewed and revised.

*Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking*

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on September 2, 2026, as **ARC 0521D**. Public hearings were held on the following date:

- September 29, 2026

No one attended the public hearings. No public comments were received.

Changes from the Notice have been made. Subrules 3.1(2) and 3.1(4) and paragraph 3.16(1)"c" were revised to use a consistent, defined term. Subrule 3.4(2) was revised to increase the minimum academic examination average from 70 to 80 percent. This change aligns testing standards with the complex legal and operational demands of modern law enforcement, ensuring candidates demonstrate subject-matter proficiency and competency prior to licensure. Rules 501—3.7(80B) and 501—3.8(80B) were clarified because the current physical test is normed. Subrule 3.11(1) was revised to increase the time in which a sponsored applicant needs to file an application to attend basic academy to ensure there is enough time to complete and verify minimum hiring standards. Subrule 3.13(2) was revised to rename the in-person skills week to a course. Rule 501—3.14(80B,80D) was revised to ensure the required curriculum for reserve officers is consistent with rule 501—3.6(80B,80D). Subparagraph 3.16(1)"a"(2) was revised to require an updated fingerprint check prior to the submission of reserve weapons applications.

*Adoption of Rulemaking*

This rulemaking was adopted by the Council on October 7, 2026.

*Fiscal Impact*

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

*Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

*Waivers*

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Council for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 7—Chapter 2504.

*Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its regular monthly meeting or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

*Effective Date*

This rulemaking will become effective on January 1, 2027.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Rescind 501—Chapter 3 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 3
CERTIFICATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RESERVE OFFICERS

**501—3.1(80B,80D) Certification timeline for law enforcement and reserve officers.**

**3.1(1)** *Certification.* All law enforcement and reserve officers must be certified through the successful completion of training through a certifying course in order to remain eligible for employment. Law enforcement and reserve officers must be certified within one year of their initial employment.

*a.* A person elected or appointed sheriff must complete a basic training course as provided by Iowa Code section 331.651(2)*"c"* within one year of taking office.

*b.* A sheriff who does not complete the physical training requirements will be awarded a qualification for service in the county in which the sheriff was elected or appointed upon completion of the basic training course.

**3.1(2)** *Extension of time.* The council may, at its discretion, extend the one-year time period in which a law enforcement or reserve officer must become certified for up to 180 days after a showing of undue hardship by the law enforcement or reserve officer or the law enforcement or reserve officer's employing or appointing agency. Extensions will not be liberally granted and will only be granted after a showing that all other alternatives to an extension have been considered and rejected.

**3.1(3)** *Automatic extension.* The one-year time period in which a law enforcement officer must become certified is automatically extended for 180 days for a law enforcement officer who is enrolled in a level I or level II training course within 12 months of initial appointment. For purposes of this subrule, "enrolled" means physically present in and currently attending the certifying course.

**3.1(4)** *Time calculation.* The time period within which a person must obtain certification as a law enforcement or reserve officer begins on the day a person is first employed as a law enforcement officer or appointed as a reserve officer in the state of Iowa. Subsequent changes to employment status, including transfers to a different employing or appointing agency, will not toll or otherwise extend the certification period.

**3.1(5)** *Failure to obtain certification.* Should a person employed as a law enforcement or reserve officer fail to obtain certification within the time period or any extensions allowed, that person will not be eligible for employment as and will not serve as a law enforcement or reserve officer in the state of Iowa for a period of not less than 12 months. The period of ineligibility begins on the date the person last worked as a law enforcement officer or reserve officer.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"b,"* 80B.17, 80D.4, 80D.4A, and 331.651(2).

**501—3.2(80D) State certification for reserve officers appointed prior to July 1, 2007.** If a reserve officer appointed prior to July 1, 2007, with agency certification only transfers to another agency, the reserve officer will be considered a new reserve officer and subject to the 12-month training requirement and minimum hiring standards for state certification.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 80D.3(3)*"b."*

**501—3.3(80B,80D) Minimum standards for certifying courses.** The level I and level II academies will meet the requirements of nondegree programs under the federal veterans educational assistance Acts.

**3.3(1)** The standard certifying courses at an approved law enforcement training facility are:

*a.* Level I academy, consisting of at least 640 hours, with a minimum of 224 hours practical application including real world scenario-based training led by approved instructors or delivered through academy-approved online training modules; and

*b.* Level II academy, consisting of at least 440 hours, with a minimum of 154 hours practical application including real world scenario-based training led by approved instructors or delivered through academy-approved online training modules.

**3.3(2)** Alternative certifying courses at an approved law enforcement training facility consist of written assessments and skills proficiency led by approved instructors, including:

*a.* Certification through examination (out-of-state reciprocity);

*b.* Military or federal reciprocity; and

*c.* Reserve officer training.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a," "b," "d,"* and *"e"*; 80D.4A; and 80B.11B(4).

**501—3.4(80B) Minimum standards for Iowa law enforcement certification upon completion of level I or level II academy.** An individual will meet all of the following minimum standards to earn an Iowa law enforcement officer certification upon completion of a level I academy or a level II academy:

**3.4(1)** Successfully complete 100 percent of the course curriculum hours unless otherwise approved in advance by the director;

**3.4(2)** Attain an average of 80 percent or greater on academic examinations;

**3.4(3)** Successfully complete the firearms curriculum, including a qualifying score of not less than 80 percent on three of four handgun qualification courses of fire, the approved low-light handgun course of fire, the approved shotgun course of fire, and three of four rifle courses of fire;

**3.4(4)** Successfully complete the vehicle operations curriculum, including all courses and scenarios;

**3.4(5)** Successfully complete the defensive tactics curriculum, including all evaluations of techniques and scenarios;

**3.4(6)** Actively participate and progress in the physical training program and pass the physical training test at the required standard;

**3.4(7)** Actively participate in all practical skills and life skills applications; and

**3.4(8)** Successfully complete all evaluated assignments, scenarios, and exercises.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a," "b," "d,"* and *"e"* and 80B.13(3).

**501—3.5(80B) Minimum standards for Iowa law enforcement certification upon completion of a reciprocity course.** An individual will successfully complete the standards in rule 501—3.4(80B), excluding subrule 3.4(6) and pass the physical training test at the required standard, in order to earn an Iowa law enforcement officer certification upon completion of a reciprocity course.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a," "b," "d,"* and *"e"* and 80B.13(3).

**501—3.6(80B,80D) Minimum standards for Iowa certification for reserve officers.** An individual will successfully complete the standards in rule 501—3.4(80B), excluding subrules 3.4(3) and 3.4(6),

to earn an Iowa reserve officer certification upon completion of the reserve officer course. Weapons certification(s) are issued consistent with rule 501—3.16(80D).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.13(3), 80D.3, 80D.4, and 80D.4A.

**501—3.7(80B) Qualifications for attendance at level I academy.** An individual meeting the requirements of Iowa Code section 80B.11E may apply for attendance at a level I academy. Approval may be granted when an individual provides confirmation of meeting all minimum standards and passes the physical test approved by the council.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a"* and 80B.11E.

**501—3.8(80B) Qualifications for attendance at level II academy.** An individual may apply for attendance at a level II academy when the individual provides confirmation of meeting all minimum standards, passes the physical test approved by the council, and meets one of the following.

**3.8(1)** *Police science or criminal justice degree.* The individual obtains at least 20 credit hours dedicated to police science or criminal justice coursework in which a grade no lower than C- is reflected on the submitted transcript from which a degree is awarded within three years of applying.

**3.8(2)** *Reciprocity application.* The individual is granted approval by the council after consideration of a reciprocity application under Iowa Code section 80B.11H(4).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a,"* 80B.11D, and 80B.11H.

**501—3.9(80B) Qualifications for out-of-state reciprocity.** Law enforcement officers certified by another state may apply for out-of-state reciprocity or extended reciprocity. The council will consider evidence of meeting the requirements of Iowa Code section 80B.11F and information received by the council in granting approval of the application.

**3.9(1)** *Eligibility criteria.* The following minimum criteria will be met for the council to consider an applicant for certification through reciprocity:

*a.* Successful completion of a minimum 440-hour certifying basic law enforcement training course, for which certification has not been withdrawn or suspended by the certifying state.

*b.* One year of employment as a full-time certified law enforcement officer in the three-year period preceding the application.

**3.9(2)** *Application and testing periods.* Failure to apply for reciprocity prior to beginning employment in Iowa may result in the applicant being required to attend a standard certifying course.

**3.9(3)** *Extended reciprocity.* The council may authorize an individual meeting all reciprocity qualifications to complete an extended reciprocity course at the academy or an approved regional training center.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 80B.11F.

**501—3.10(80B) Evaluation of applications for military or federal reciprocity.** The council will evaluate an applicant's accredited police training by comparing training hours for each functional area of the academy's approved curriculum to those completed by the applicant via a training equivalency form. Course descriptions, lesson plans, curriculum overview, or any combination will be used to determine the equivalency comparison.

**3.10(1)** An applicant's failure to provide the necessary information for the council to determine equivalency for any training may result in credit being denied for that training.

**3.10(2)** An applicant approved for military or federal reciprocity will successfully complete the curriculum identified in rule 501—3.13(80B).

**3.10(3)** If an applicant is not approved for entry into the military or federal reciprocity program, or if requested by the applicant, the council will evaluate an applicant for entry into a level II academy based upon completed training and relevant experience to Iowa law enforcement practice.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 80B.11H.

**501—3.11(80B) Training of a sponsored individual.**

**3.11(1)** An individual not yet hired as an Iowa sworn law enforcement officer will submit a complete application packet provided by the academy, with the established administrative fee, at least 60 days in advance of the start of the certifying course.

*a.* The fees to attend a standard certifying course at the academy will be collected as follows:

(1) 25 percent at the end of week one.

(2) 25 percent at the end of week two.

(3) 25 percent at the end of week three.

(4) The remaining fees are due by the end of the fourth week or the individual will be dismissed from the academy.

*b.* The fees to attend a certifying course at an approved law enforcement regional training center will be collected as determined by that entity.

**3.11(2)** Once employed by an Iowa law enforcement agency and having all minimum hiring requirements confirmed by the academy, the individual will complete firearms qualifications with their duty weapon at the academy.

**3.11(3)** Certification will be granted if, within 18 months of successful completion of the approved certifying course, the individual successfully completes the firearms qualification.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11D and 80B.11E.

**501—3.12(80B) Level I and level II curriculum.** An academy-aligned training curriculum for a level I academy and level II academy will be initially approved by the director and confirmed by the council.

**3.12(1)** The curriculum will be derived from the academy's Iowa job task analysis not more than seven years old and includes:

*a.* Core concepts.

(1) American policing and community.

(2) Officer development and wellness.

(3) Investigative procedures.

(4) Legal knowledge and applications.

(5) Patrol procedures.

(6) Use of force.

*b.* Core skills.

(1) Communication and report writing.

(2) Life skills, including physical training, basic first aid, and interacting with people in crisis.

(3) Practical skills, including chemical spray, defensive tactics, firearms, vehicle operations, vehicle stops, and standardized field sobriety testing.

*c.* Core competencies.

(1) Critical thinking.

(2) Deliberation and decision making.

(3) Self-awareness and management.

(4) Observation and perception.

(5) Verbal influence and de-escalation.

**3.12(2)** Training will include course materials, written assignments, formative and summative assessments, and relevant performance tasks or practical exercises where recruits are assessed over a variety of criteria.

**3.12(3)** Changes to the council-approved curriculum or completion standards will be approved by the director and confirmed by the council.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a," "b," "d," "e"* and 80B.13(3).

**501—3.13(80B) Reciprocity curriculum.** An academy-aligned training curriculum for reciprocity will be initially approved by the director and confirmed by the council.

**3.13(1)** The curriculum will include:

*a.* Core concepts of legal knowledge and application.

*b.* Core skills to include firearms, standardized field sobriety testing, defensive tactics, vehicle operations, physical training, and basic first aid.

*c.* Core competencies from paragraph 3.12(1)*"c."*

**3.13(2)** Training will include course materials, formative and summative assessments, and relative performance tasks or practical exercises where law enforcement officers are assessed over a variety of criteria at an in-person skills course at the academy.

**3.13(3)** Changes to the council-approved curriculum or completion standards will be approved by the director.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11F(2), 80B.11H, and 80B.13(3).

**501—3.14(80B,80D) Reserve officer curriculum.**

**3.14(1)** An academy-aligned training curriculum for reserve officers will be initially approved by the director and confirmed by the council. The curriculum will include the following.

*a.* Core concepts from paragraph 3.12(1)*"a."*

*b.* Core skills from paragraph 3.12(1)*"b,"* excluding physical training and training for standardized field sobriety testing and any identified weapons or chemical spray the reserve officer will not be authorized to carry.

*c.* Core competencies from paragraph 3.12(1)*"c."*

**3.14(2)** Training will include course materials, written assignments, formative and summative assessments, and relative performance tasks or practical exercises where reserve officers are assessed over a variety of criteria.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.13(3), 80D.3, 80D.4, 80D.4A, and 80D.7.

**501—3.15(80B,80D) Special certification.** In consideration of the varying factors and special requirements of law enforcement agencies, special certifying training courses may be initially developed and approved by the director and confirmed by the council.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11(1)*"a"* and *"b,"* 80B.13(1), 80B.13(3), 80B.13(5), 80D.4, and 80D.4A.

**501—3.16(80B,80D) Weapons certification.**

**3.16(1)** Weapons certification for reserve officers. Weapons training is not required for any weapons a reserve officer is not authorized to carry. The process to apply for a weapons certification from the council is as follows.

*a. Application process.* The reserve officer will submit a complete application for weapons certification to the council.

(1) The application will be on the approved form.

(2) The application will include confirmation that the applicant is of good moral character as defined in 501—subrule 2.1(5), verified by a fingerprint-based criminal history record check completed within 30 days of receipt of the application.

*b. Temporary weapons certification.* A temporary weapons certification may be granted upon completion of the approved curriculum taught by a qualified instructor for each authorized weapon. A qualified instructor will hold the correct practical skills endorsement or be an approved instructor for a third-party vendor when an endorsement is not offered by the council.

(1) The director may grant initial approval for a temporary weapons certification if the reserve officer meets the eligibility criteria, which will be confirmed by the council.

(2) The temporary weapons certification will expire on the earliest of the following dates:

1. The date the reserve officer successfully completes reserve officer training;

2. The deadline by which the reserve officer is required to complete reserve officer training including any council-approved extensions;

3. The end of the reserve officer's appointment; or

4. The council approves a permanent weapons certification.

*c. Permanent weapons certification.* A permanent weapons certification expires when a reserve officer ends their employment with the employing agency and begins on the date:

(1) The reserve officer successfully completes reserve officer training and a reserve officer certification is issued; or

(2) The council confirms the weapons certification for a certified reserve officer.

**3.16(2)** Weapons certifications for law enforcement officers serving as reserve officers. Certified law enforcement officers may be certified to carry weapons as reserve officers without repeating the required weapons training. The process to apply for a weapons certification from the council is as follows.

*a. Application process.* The law enforcement officer will submit a complete application for weapons certification on the approved form to the council.

(1) The application will include confirmation that the academy has approved the law enforcement officer's report of hire as a reserve officer.

(2) The application will include confirmation that the law enforcement officer has successfully completed the training curriculum for each weapon for which approval is requested.

(3) A law enforcement officer seeking approval for firearms will also provide the following:

1. Confirmation that the law enforcement officer has fired a qualifying score of 80 percent or higher on an academy-approved course of fire within the past 12 months that was conducted by another law enforcement officer having a firearms instructor endorsement; and

2. Confirmation that firearms training was successfully completed under the law enforcement officer's Iowa certifying course; and

3. Confirmation that the individual is serving as a law enforcement officer for another department at the time of appointment as a reserve officer, or served as a law enforcement officer within 12 months immediately preceding appointment as a reserve officer.

*b. Temporary weapons certification.* The director may grant initial approval for a temporary weapons certification if the law enforcement officer meets the eligibility criteria.

*c. Final weapons certification.* A final weapons certification will be issued upon confirmation by the council.

**3.16(3)** A certified reserve officer with a weapons certification transferring to a new law enforcement agency with a less than 180-day break in service will complete an application to carry weapons for the new agency and file the application with the academy within 30 days of the transfer. Failure to timely complete the weapons application will require weapons certification training and qualification.

**3.16(4)** A certified reserve officer with a break in service greater than 180 days will complete weapons certification training and provide confirmation as provided in paragraph 3.16(1)*"a."*

**3.16(5)** A reserve officer serving more than one Iowa law enforcement agency at the same time will be certified by the council to carry weapons for each agency in compliance with Iowa Code section 80D.7. The reserve officer need not complete weapons training for each agency, but all agencies will maintain duplicate training records for the reserve officer.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.13(3), 80D.3, 80D.4, 80D.4A, and 80D.7.

**501—3.17(80B,80D) More extensive certifying course curricula not prohibited.** Approved local and area schools and regional training centers may exceed the approved curriculum.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 80B.11, 80B.11F, 80B.11H, 80D.4, and 80D.4A.

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