



To: Southern California Training Managers

From: Adept Training Group

Date: 05/03/2026

Subject: Legal Foundation for Probation Officers - 2 hour block

Course Overview

Over the span of a career, probation officers often rely on established practices such as “4th Waiver” authority and general compliance from the public to carry out their duties. But a critical question remains: do officers truly understand the legal foundation behind their actions—or are they relying on tradition and training passed down without deeper analysis?

In today’s legal and political climate, it is no longer enough to simply know *what* to do. Officers must be able to clearly articulate *why* they are authorized to act. **Legal Foundation for Probation Officers** is an interactive, discussion-driven course designed to strengthen that understanding. Through roundtable discussions, and critical examination of commonly accepted practices, participants will explore the legal authority that governs their daily enforcement actions and challenge assumptions rooted in “how it’s always been done.”

Connection to Theme: Strengthening Our Foundation

This course directly aligns with the seminar theme by reinforcing the legal principles that form the core of probation work. By revisiting and strengthening officers’ understanding of constitutional authority, statutory law, and case law, this training ensures that field practices are grounded in a solid, defensible legal framework. A stronger foundation

leads to better decision-making, reduced liability, and increased professionalism in the field.

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this 2-hour session, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify and discuss probation officer legal authority**, including relevant penal codes and case law governing:
 - Consensual encounters
 - Detentions
 - Arrests
 2. **Identify and discuss key case law** pertaining to:
 - The detention of individuals during probation compliance searches
 - The scope and limitations of “4th Waiver” authority
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Instructional Approach

This course is designed to be highly engaging and practical, emphasizing application over lecture. Instructional methods include:

- **Facilitated Roundtable Discussions:** Open dialogue to compare experiences, clarify misconceptions, and explore differing interpretations of authority.
 - **Case Law Integration:** Participants will break down relevant legal precedents and apply them directly to field scenarios.
 - **Critical Reflection Exercises:** Challenging long-standing practices and encouraging participants to evaluate whether those practices are legally sound.
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Target Audience

- Probation Officers (Juvenile and Adult)
 - Supervising Probation Officers
 - Training Managers and Instructors
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Instructor Information

Chris Sanchez

Chris Sanchez is a currently active probation officer with 20 years of experience in a Southern California probation department. He has over 15 years of instructional experience and has worked extensively in both juvenile and adult field supervision. His field background includes specialized assignments in gangs and narcotics task forces. Chris brings extensive expertise in Use of Force and Constitutional Law and has expanded his instructional work into Instructor Development, training personnel across multiple California probation departments. He is currently assigned full-time to his agency's training unit, where he provides instruction to both field and institutional staff across a wide range of topics.

Chris DeCoudres

Chris DeCoudres has 20 years of experience in the probation field, beginning in juvenile supervision across informal, formal, and placement caseloads. He has served on multi-agency gang enforcement and Post Release Accountability and Compliance teams, and has spent the past decade as a supervisor overseeing Post Release Community Supervision, Mandatory Supervision, and adult probation caseloads. Chris is a certified instructor in De-Escalation, Use of Force reporting, Weaponless Self-Defense, Rapid Containment Baton, PC 832 Arrest and Control, Weapon Retention, and Defensive Tactics. He is recognized for delivering practical, skills-based training that emphasizes real-world application.

Tim Goodwyn

Tim Goodwyn has 23 years of experience in the probation field, including work in juvenile institutions, field supervision of both juvenile and adult caseloads, and assignments on sex offender and gang task forces. For the past 12 years, he has served as a supervisor with experience in collaborative courts, task force oversight, and training program leadership. He currently serves as a training supervisor overseeing field training and armed force options programs. Tim is a certified range instructor, simunition force-on-force instructor, taser instructor, defensive tactics instructor, and primary arming

academy instructor, and is responsible for delivering instruction across multiple high-liability training areas.

Expected Outcomes

Participants will leave this session with:

- A clearer understanding of the legal authority behind common enforcement actions
 - Increased confidence in articulating and defending those actions
 - Enhanced critical thinking when evaluating field practices
 - Tools to reinforce legally sound training within their own agencies
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Conclusion

Strengthening the legal foundation of probation officers is essential in today's environment of heightened scrutiny and accountability. This course provides a focused, practical opportunity to ensure that officers are not just acting out of habit, but from a position of clear legal understanding. By reinforcing this foundation, agencies can better support their staff, protect their communities, and uphold the integrity of the profession.