



Office of the City Council

280 North Third Avenue • Oakdale, CA 95361 • Ph: (209) 845-3571 • Fax: (209) 847-6834

Finance Department

280 N. Third Ave.
Oakdale, CA 95361
(209) 845-3571
(209) 847-6834 Fax

**Facility Rentals &
Recreation Division**
(209) 845-3591
(209) 847-6834 Fax

**PUBLIC SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**
455 S. 5th Ave.
Oakdale, CA 95361
(209) 848-4344 Fax

**Administration,
Engineering &
Maintenance
Divisions**
(209) 845-3600

**Building & Planning
Division**
(209) 845-3625

POLICE DEPARTMENT
250 N. Third Ave.
Oakdale, CA 95361
(209) 847-2231
(209) 847-3790 Fax

FIRE DEPARTMENT
SCFPD Headquarters:
3318 Topeka Street
Riverbank
(209) 869-7470
(209) 869-7475 Fax
Station No. 5:
325 East "G" St.
(209) 322-3809
(209) 322-3723 Fax
Station No. 4:
450 S. Willowood Dr.
Oakdale, CA 95361
(209) 847-5904
(209) 847-5907 Fax

**CITY OF OAKDALE
WEBSITE**
www.oakdalegov.com

E-MAIL
info@ci.oakdale.ca.us

VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL

July 8, 2025

Honorable Sonny Sandhu
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, County of Stanislaus
P.O. Box 3488
Modesto, CA 95353

Re: Grand Jury Report "Oakdale Police Department Mandated Training Implementation Report"

Dear Judge Sandhu:

The Oakdale Police Department (OPD) appreciates the thorough and balanced review conducted by the 2024–2025 Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury (SCCGJ) in Case #25-19GJ. The professionalism and objective tone reflected in this year’s report provide a constructive framework for evaluating organizational improvement and public service compliance.

We are particularly encouraged by the fair and collaborative spirit of the current Grand Jury’s process, which stands in contrast to the comparisons presented in the prior 2022–2023 report. While we respected the previous jury’s role and welcomed their attention to training standards, some of their findings appeared to lack context regarding the structural limitations and pandemic-related realities faced by smaller law enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, we approached the findings seriously and used them as a catalyst to strengthen our training infrastructure.

The findings of the 2025 report affirm the meaningful reforms and diligence our department has demonstrated over the past two years. We agree fully with all four of the SCCGJ’s findings and welcome the opportunity to respond with transparency and pride in our progress.

These findings validate the sustained efforts of the OPD leadership, the Training Coordinator, and officers in ensuring compliance with all mandated training requirements set forth by the State of California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). Our department is committed to continuing this progress and maintaining the reforms implemented in response to the 2022–2023 Grand Jury report.

The following was in our response to SCCGJ requests in 2024:

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Additionally, as one can see, our officers' training during the POST training cycle 2023 – 2024 was front-loaded; most of our training took place in 2023. During our two-year training cycle, we strategically focused on training most of our officers during the first year to ensure all required training was completed on time. This proactive approach allowed us to manage resources effectively, prioritize critical training needs, and provide flexibility in the second year for additional training opportunities, make-up sessions, or unforeseen scheduling challenges. By frontloading the training, we ensured that our department maintained operational readiness while meeting all compliance requirements, setting a strong foundation for success throughout the cycle. This will be our approach for the upcoming POST training cycle 2025 – 2026.

We are currently in the 2025-2026 POST training cycle (January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026). The cycle runs from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026. This gives law enforcement agencies two years to complete all of the POST-mandated training. Currently, with 25% of the training cycle complete (six months), eight officers and sergeants have completed their POST-mandated training. Eight more officers/sergeants are scheduled to complete POST-mandated training before the end of 2025. All POST-mandated training for officers and sergeants will be completed in the first half of the POST training cycle. There are two employees who are exempt because they are recent hires, and one employee who is on workers' compensation, preventing him from participating in training. We will complete the training waiver. We are holding true to what we said in our response. This demonstrates our commitment to meeting our training obligations, ensuring the best possible service to our community.

The original information request from the Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury, dated November 26, 2024 (attached), specifically requested “2023 and 2024 **Officer** Training logs” to verify compliance with mandated training. In full cooperation with that request, the Oakdale Police Department submitted the training records for all active officers, and out of an abundance of transparency, also included logs for supervisory staff such as sergeants, even though they were not explicitly or specifically requested. The training records for three management members were not included in the initial submission because the original request focused on officer compliance. However, when the SCCGJ submitted a follow-up request on January 14, 2025 (attached), requesting the management records, we responded immediately and supplied the documentation without delay. This quick and complete follow-up underscores OPD's ongoing commitment to transparency and cooperative engagement throughout the review process.

Finding 1:

“The Oakdale Police Department is found to be in compliance with deadlines recommended in the 2022-2023 SCCGJ Report related to mandatory Peace Officer Training.”

Response:

We agree. OPD met all the deadlines, and our compliance status was achieved through a robust plan that began in 2021 and intensified through 2023. Our staff implemented a comprehensive training recovery plan, ensuring we were fully compliant with POST requirements ahead of the December 31, 2024, deadline.

Finding 2:

“Oakdale Police Department officers are current in statewide standards for training required by the California State Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training or have legitimate waivers related to recent dates of hire and training received in the academy within the training cycle.”

Response:

We agree. As noted in both the Compliance Analysis Report and training logs submitted to the SCCGJ, all officers are either compliant or are within the grace period as outlined by POST regulations 1005(d)(2)(A)2 and 1005(d)(2)(A)3. This interpretation was a key point of clarification in our 2023 response.

Finding 3:

“The Oakdale Police Department Training Coordinator is in compliance with recommendations included in the 2022–2023 SCCGJ Report related to attendance at the Training Manager’s Workshops in 2023 and 2024.”

Response:

We agree. OPD’s Training Coordinator attended the February 1, 2023, and December 17, 2024, Training Manager Workshops, as confirmed through records of the California Police Training Managers Association. This reflects our commitment to professional development and maintaining industry best practices.

Finding 4:

“The Oakdale Police Department’s Master Training Plan is in order and up to date.”

Response:

We agree. The revised plan includes Domestic Violence training in the “Police Officer, Field Services” classification as recommended in 2023. This was a direct improvement based on the SCCGJ’s earlier recommendation and has been fully implemented.

Acknowledging the 2023 Findings and Moving Forward

The City of Oakdale previously responded to the 2022–2023 SCCGJ findings (Case #23-10C), acknowledging areas of concern but respectfully clarifying misconceptions regarding our efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting training interruptions. We highlight several key points from our original response:

- **Training Recovery & Planning:** By 2022, OPD had doubled POST training hours compared to 2021. A total of over 2,500 hours were completed in 2022 compared to 1,100 in 2021, which was prior to the SCCGJ investigation.
- **LEFTA Implementation:** We adopted the LEFTA system in late 2022, a web-based platform that integrates POST EDI and provides proactive training expiration alerts, fundamentally transforming our tracking and compliance capabilities.
- **STOP Training Completion:** The four officers identified in the original SCCGJ report as out of compliance were scheduled for STOP training before the release of the report and completed their requirements in early 2023.

- **Training Committee Use:** The 2023 report questioned the activity of the Training Committee. We clarified that under Policy 203, it is convened only as needed for critical incidents. While such incidents have not occurred recently, the Standards and Training Coordinator continues to meet regularly with leadership to discuss and manage training.
- **Lack of Comparable Benchmarking in Original Report:** The 2022–2023 Grand Jury report drew comparisons between OPD and much larger agencies, such as Modesto PD and the Stanislaus County Sheriff’s Office, each nearly nine times the size of OPD. This approach did not provide an accurate or fair assessment of our training capacity. When measured against similarly sized agencies in the region, OPD’s compliance rate was well within the same range. In fact, several agencies of comparable or even larger size reported similar percentages of officers temporarily out of compliance as of January 1, 2023.

Furthermore, POST now explicitly accommodates valid reasons why officers may miss mandated training, recognizing circumstances such as injuries, illness, administrative leave, court assignments, or other approved operational duties. Under the POST waiver framework specifically referenced in Form 2-267 and Commission Regulation 1005, agencies can document and justify such absences through a formal Training Waiver Application, providing details such as medical certifications, administrative orders, or duty assignment records to support the case for the officer being out of compliance due to legitimate reasons. This prevents officers from being unfairly marked non-compliant when their absence stems from service-related obligations or personal incapacity. We can reasonably conclude that at least two of the officers identified as out of compliance as of January 1, 2023, would have qualified for compliance if the POST waiver process (including grace periods and documentation for excused absences) had been considered or available at the time.

Moving Forward – Sustaining Excellence

We are grateful for the commendation offered in the 2025 report, which recognized our proactive and transparent cooperation during this follow-up review. We acknowledge the report’s emphasis on sustaining current improvements and will continue to:

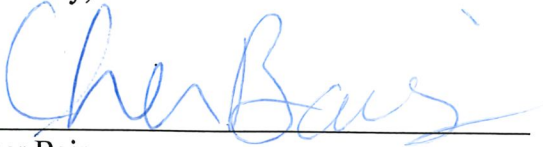
- Ensure all officers remain compliant with POST and state mandates.
- Maintain and routinely update the Master Training Plan.
- Guarantee ongoing participation in Training Manager’s Workshops.
- Hold Training Committee meetings when circumstances dictate, in accordance with Policy 203.

Our objective remains the same: to deliver effective, compliant, and community-focused policing, ensuring public trust and safety through well-trained officers.

We sincerely thank the SCCGJ for its oversight, professionalism, and partnership in ensuring public accountability. The 2025 findings are a welcome affirmation of our hard work and dedication. OPD remains steadfast in our commitment to training, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Because this matter is being presented at the City Council meeting, we felt it was appropriate and in the interest of full transparency to include all correspondence between the Oakdale Police Department and the Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury. Including these documents ensures that the Council and our community have a complete and accurate record of our communications, responses, and the cooperative steps taken throughout the Grand Jury's investigation and follow-up. This also reflects our commitment to accountability and provides important context for the positive findings included in the final report.

Sincerely,



Cher Bairos
Mayor
City of Oakdale



Jerry Ramar
Interim City Manager
City of Oakdale