



STATE OF MAINE
 Department of Public Safety
MAINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY
 15 Oak Grove Road
 Vassalboro, Maine 04989



Paul R. LePage
 Governor

John E. Morris
 Commissioner

To: Director Doug Denico, Maine Forest Service
 From: Director John B. Rogers, Maine Criminal Justice Academy
 Re: LD 297 – “An Act to Require Forest Rangers To Be Trained In Order To Allow Them To Carry Firearms”
 Date: April 1, 2013

John B. Rogers
 Director

On Friday, March 29, 2013, I met with you and Chief Ranger Bill Hamilton regarding LD 297 and the costs associated for training of up to 74 Forest Rangers who have limited law enforcement powers, per the 12 M.R.S., section 8901. As you know, the Maine Forest Rangers are currently exempted from both the Law Enforcement Pre-service course (LEPS), the Basic Law Enforcement Training Program (BLETP) and the annual law enforcement in-service training that the vast majority of other law enforcement officers in Maine are required to do.

However, you do have a Forest Ranger Academy that covers some of the law enforcement topics, as well as the forest fire fighting topics. You also have 26 Forest Rangers that have been through the LEPS course and 9 through the BLETP or equivalent. The requirements of proposed LD 297 would require that the Forest Rangers be trained in the use of a firearm, attend the LEPS course prior to 7/1/2014 and all those hired after 7/1/2014 be required to complete the BLETP. The first question needs to be answered by you or the legislature. “Are the Forest Rangers in harm’s way?” If so, the Department of Public Safety’s position is that they be trained. If not in harm’s way, our position would be status quo with all the current training exemptions. This decision is really a matter of public policy and I’m not in a position to make that decision.

If the answer to this question is “yes” they are in harm’s way, then I see there are 4 options from a training prospective.

Option #1. Do nothing and allow your officers to be unarmed and not trained in firearms use, use for force decision making and weapon retention. This would require no legislative changes, but there certainly could be some unknown liability costs if a Forest Ranger was ever in harm’s way and had no way to protect themselves or a 3rd party. **Total Cost - None.**

Option #2. Require a training program for Firearms; however I would insist that it must include how we are currently train officers in the BLETP, which is 7 hours of classroom, and 40 hours on the range taught by a MCJA Certified Firearms Instructor. I would strongly insist there must be an additional 8 hours of Use of Force Laws/AG Protocol for Officer Involved Shooting taught by the AG’s Office and 8+ hours of Weapon Retention/Use of Force Scenarios taught by a MARC Instructor. This training program could be done in approximately 64 hours. This would require 74 handguns, gun belts, holsters and ballistic vests, plus the cost of ammo at 1500 rounds for each Forest Ranger. **Total Cost - \$142,837, plus the unknown salary costs, policy formulation costs, lock boxes, and ongoing training to be determined by the Maine Forest Service.**

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Option #3. Require that all 74 Forest Rangers take the 64 hour program outlined in **Option #2**, plus 39 Forest Rangers be required to take the LEPS course, outlined in 25 M.R.S. §2804-B, and the mandatory annual in-service training, outlined in 25 M.R.S. §2804-E. I would also require the agency to file mandatory policies, outlined 25 M.R.S §2803-B and the mandatory annual reports, outlined in 25 M.R.S. §2805-B. This would also require a legislative change in 25 M.R.S, §2801-B to take the Maine Forest Rangers off the list of being exempt from mandatory training and mandatory policies. **Total Cost - \$238,426, plus the unknown salary costs, lock boxes, policy formulation costs and on-going training to be determined by the Maine Forest Service.**

Option #4: Require all 74 Forest Rangers take the training requirements (LEPS, Mandatory In-service and 64 hour Firearm Program) as outlined in **Option #2** until the 65 Forest Rangers go through the BLETP training over several years. It would also require the Maine Forest Service to abide by the mandatory policies and for the agency to file the mandatory annual report. Specifically, it would also require that Forest Rangers hired after 7/1/2014 be required to attend the BLETP. This would require a legislative change to 25 M.R.S. §2801-B, §2803-A and a new §2804-L. **Total Cost - \$2,120,495, plus lock boxes, policy formulation costs and ongoing training to be determined by the Maine Forest Service.**

MCJA Costs

Firearms Course	1500 rounds of ammo	Guns with 3 clips	Ballistic Vest	Range Rental (4weeks)	5 Firearms Instructors	64 Hour Class	Total
1 Ranger	\$250	\$550	\$938			\$128	\$1,866
74 Rangers	\$18,500	\$40,700	\$69,412	\$3,000	\$1,625	\$9,600	\$142,837

74 Forest Rangers Positions (including 8 vacant positions)
 39 Forest Rangers needing LEPS Training or equivalent training
 65 Forest Rangers needing BLETP or equivalent training

LEPS	Phase I	Alert Test	PFT Test	Phase II	Firearms Equipment	Firearms Class	Total
1 Ranger	\$250	\$50	\$35	\$250	\$1,738	\$128	\$2451
39 Rangers	\$9,750	\$1,950	\$1,365	\$9,750	\$67,782	\$4,992	\$95,589

BLETP	Tuition	Alert Test	PFT Test	Polygraph / Psy. Exam	Firearms Equipment	Personnel Costs	Total
1 Ranger	\$2,500	\$50	\$35	\$800	\$1,738	\$27,500	\$32,623
65 Rangers	\$162,500	\$3,250	\$2,275	\$52,000	\$112,970	\$1,787,500	\$2,120,495

None of these costs include the annual firearms qualifications.