

# ILETSB – FOIA forces compliance – Sheriffs receive letters –

Illinois ([ECWd](#)) –

The Illinois Law Enforcement Training & Standards Board is responsible for a laundry list of matters as it relates to our Law Enforcement Officers in the state of Illinois. One would think, of all agencies in the state, this one would have their act together and do the job they are paid to do, but once again, we must expose that thought process as a fallacy.

Of most interest to us in this particular case is how the Freedom of Information Act turned out to be more than just a law that gives the public access to their records (Yes, we own the records). FOIA is a law that when applied properly, as done in this case, can trigger a government agency to do the job they are paid to do.

In this case, we now have 29 Sheriffs that have been notified they are not in compliance with their obligation as it relates to training and notification to the ILETSB. Sadly, this case also exposes the fact the ILETSB was less than honest with previous requests. Why they chose the path they did before is beyond me, but we now know it's being done properly.

In October of last year, I submitted a [FOIA request](#) and asked for two simple items.

- *A Copy of the Law Enforcement Officers Training Board record for each Sheriff in Illinois used to determine the amount of hours of approved training each Sheriff receives during each calendar year. (1720.70f)*
- *A Copy of any letters sent notifying any Illinois Sheriffs of their non-compliance with the ILETSB*

*training requirements. (1720.70i)*

***ILETSB responded with the following:***

- *The Board does not maintain a Sheriff training tracking system. If you have a special Sheriff(s) you would like to inquire about, we can produce individual Sheriff's training records.*
- *We do not send non-compliance letters to Sheriffs.*

After asking for them to send me the information for all the Sheriffs, they never responded to that request, which arguably is a FOIA violation.

The reason I asked for the items above was that the Illinois Administrative Code outlines the ILETSB's obligations as it relates to our Sheriffs in this state and their training. I was shocked to get a response that they do not send non-compliance letters to the Sheriffs as required by law. However, I shouldn't be surprised because this is the same state agency that is required to [approve all the Directors for Police Academies](#) and they had not done that either. Almost as bad as [Board Member Lisa Madigan not showing up for a single board meeting](#) in the last three years.

Fast forward to January 31st, 2017, and a [new FOIA request](#) that quoted the actual obligation of the ILETSB instead of citing the number. The two key requests listed below tie back to the October request that produced nothing.

- *The Illinois Local Governmental Law Enforcement Officers Training Board shall maintain a record for each Sheriff in Illinois to determine the amount of hours of approved training each Sheriff receives during each calendar year. I am requesting a copy of that specific record for the last three years.*
- *Sheriffs who do not complete 20 hours of approved training prior to December 31 of any calendar year for the preceding calendar year will be issued a letter*

*notifying them of non-compliance with the Board's training requirements. I am requesting copies of any letter issued to any sheriff who has not completed the 20 hours of approved training in the last three years.*

Today I received [three years of training tracking records](#) for the Sheriffs in the state of Illinois as well as [non-compliance notification letters for 30 Sheriffs](#). I wonder why I received them now but back in October, the same request was met with a claim they have no such record and don't send out those letters?

Who knew we had 30 Sheriffs in the state who were not listed as compliant with their training obligations for 2016? As an EMT, if I fail to meet my training obligations I lose my license. Thirty-one Sheriffs in 2015 and twenty-two in 2014 were not in compliance with mandatory training reporting requirements.

The lack of reporting and meeting the mandatory training obligations is supposed to trigger a response from the ILETSB notifying those Sheriffs of their training obligation, which is part of ILETSB's oversight obligations. That never happened until after my FOIA request for those records.

Now, after my FOIA, we have 30 Sheriff's being notified of their training notification deficiency. The letters are dated February 14th, 2016, ***two weeks after my FOIA.***

The significance of this is that a simple FOIA request that was first responded to with "*We do not send non-compliance letters to Sheriffs*", is now met with the production of the actual letters, which equates to compliance of their obligations and 30 Sheriffs being put on notice.

Let this be a lesson that FOIA has serious value beyond simply getting records. It can and has forced public bodies to perform their duties. Duties that we the taxpayer are paying them to perform.

More updates on the ILETSB to follow.

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