

DRE SCHOOL

What Subject Matter Does The Course Cover?

The training covers concepts and skills that are fundamental to the DRE's job. A traffic safety-oriented definition of what constitutes a "drug" (i.e., "Any substance which when taken into the human body can impair the ability of the person to operate a motor vehicle safely"). Enumeration of seven distinct categories of drugs; the drug recognition process allows the DRE to identify which category or combination of categories is causing the impairment evident in a subject. Demonstrations of and practice with four divided attention psychophysical tests that are used to assess impairment during a drug evaluation. Demonstration of and practice with the three eye examinations that provide cues of the possible presence of various drug categories. Demonstrations of and practice with checks of certain vital signs that point to the possible presence of various drug categories. A review of the major observable signs that distinguish the categories from each other.

What Activities Take Place During The Training?

Although a certain minimal amount of formal lectures are required, the course consists primarily of hands-on practice. Students repeatedly drill in the divided attention tests, the eye examinations and in performing checks of the vital signs. Controlled drinking exercises (involving volunteers who are not members of the class) provide an opportunity to practice assessing impairment on the divided attention tests.

What will the students get out of this course?

The classroom training course is designed to help the students achieve three broad goals, and eight specific learning objectives.

Goals:

The student who successfully completes this phase of DRE training will be able to distinguish if an individual is under the influence of a drug or drugs other than alcohol, or under the combined influence of alcohol and other drugs, or suffering from some injury or illness that produces signs similar to alcohol/drug impairment

Identify the broad category or categories of drugs inducing the observable signs of impairment

Progress to the Certification Phase of the training.

Objectives:

Describe the involvement of drugs in impaired driving incidents

Name the seven categories of drugs and recognize their effects

Describe and properly administer the psychophysical and physiologic evaluations used in the drug evaluation and classification procedures

Document the results of the drug evaluation and classification examination

Properly interpret the results of the examination

Prepare a narrative drug influence report

Discuss appropriate procedures for testifying in typical drug evaluation and classification cases

Maintain an up-to-date and relevant curriculum vitae

What subject matter does the course cover?

The course focuses primarily on two broad topics:

(1) The examinations, observations, measurements, etc. that constitute the drug evaluation and classification procedures.

(2) The nature, effects, signs and symptoms of each of the seven categories of drugs, and of the combination of categories.

More specifically, the course provides formal presentations on:

o Drugs in Society and in Motor Vehicle Operation.

o Development and Effectiveness of the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program Procedures.

o An Overview of Physiology and Drugs.

o An Overview of the DEC Program Procedures.

- o Eye Examinations (Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus; Vertical Gaze Nystagmus; Lack of Convergence; Estimation of Pupil Size; Pupil Reaction to Light).
- o Vital Signs Examinations (Pulse Rate; Blood Pressure; Temperature)
- o The Physician's Desk Reference, and other reference materials.
- o The Seven Categories of Drugs (Central Nervous System Depressants; Central Nervous System Stimulants; Hallucinogens; Dissociative Anesthetics; Narcotic Analgesics; Inhalants; Cannabis).
- o Drug Combinations.
- o Narrative Arrest Report in Drug Evaluation Cases.
- o Case Preparation and Testimony.
- o Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) Preparation and Maintenance.

What activities take place during the training?

Formal presentations, or lectures, occupy approximately one-half of the course. These presentations cover the content topics outlined earlier. The presentations are supplemented by video tape segments, and by reading material contained in the Student's Manual. Most of the remainder of the course is devoted to demonstrations and hands-on practice of the drug evaluation and classification procedures. Students repeatedly practice in teams, developing and sharpening their skills in administering eye examinations, vital signs examinations, and other components of the drug recognition expert's job. Students also participate in several test interpretation practice sessions, in which they review sample drug evaluation and classification reports and identify the category or categories of drugs responsible for the "evidence" described in the reports. The remaining major activity is testing of the students' knowledge and proficiency. A written knowledge examination is administered, at the end of the course. A formal assessment of each student's skill in administering the drug evaluation and classification procedures is conducted during the next-to-last session.