



August 15, 2019

To: All LEAs
From: Pedro Rivera, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Education
Charles A. Ramsey, Chair, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Subject: Act 67 of 2019 School Safety Guidance

Dear Colleague,

On July 2, 2019, [Act 67 of 2019 \(Act 67\)](#) was signed into law. Act 67, which will take effect August 31, 2019, amends Article XIII-C of the Pennsylvania School Code and makes updates to Pennsylvania's school safety laws, specifically regarding the training and credentials for school resource officers (SROs), school police officers (SPOs), and school security guards.

Under Act 67, school entities and non-public schools may only authorize school employees or contractors who meet the definition of "school security personnel"— SPOs, SROs, and school security guards—to carry firearms while performing their school duties.

The attached guidance provides direction to school entities (i.e., school districts, intermediate units, area vocational-technical schools, charter schools, and private residential rehabilitative institutions) and non-public schools about the training and credentials that Act 67 requires for school security personnel to be armed.

Questions regarding training should be directed to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) at RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov. All other questions may be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Office for Safe Schools at RA-EDSAFESCHOOLSREP@pa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pedro Rivera".

Pedro Rivera
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of
Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles A. Ramsey".

Charles A. Ramsey
Chairman
Pennsylvania Commission
on Crime and Delinquency

Act 67 of 2019

On July 2, 2019, [Act 67 of 2019 \(Act 67\)](#) was signed into law. Act 67, which will take effect August 31, 2019, amends Article XIII-C of the Pennsylvania School Code and makes updates to Pennsylvania's school safety laws, specifically regarding the training and credentials for school resource officers (SROs), school police officers (SPOs), and school security guards.

Act 67 explicitly delineates which personnel a school entity or nonpublic school may authorize to carry firearms. Under Act 67, school entities and non-public schools may only authorize school employees or contractors who meet the definition of "school security personnel"— SPOs, SROs, and school security guards—to carry firearms while performing their school duties.

This guidance provides direction to school entities (i.e., school districts, intermediate units, area vocational-technical schools, charter schools and private residential rehabilitative institutions) and non-public schools about the training and credentials that Act 67 requires in order for *school security personnel* to be armed within the scope of their employment.

School Security Personnel

Act 67 defines "school security personnel" as SPOs, SROs, and school security guards.

An **SPO** is any of the following:

- A law enforcement officer employed by a school entity or nonpublic school whose responsibilities, including work hours, are established by the school entity or nonpublic school.
- An independent contractor or an individual provided through a third-party vendor who has been appointed by a judge of the court of common pleas of the county within which the school entity or nonpublic school is situated, as designated by the school board or administration of the nonpublic school.

NOTE: An **independent contractor** is an individual, including a retired Federal agent or retired State, municipal or military police officer or retired sheriff or deputy sheriff, whose responsibilities, including work hours, are established in a written contract with a school entity or a nonpublic school for the purpose of performing school security services.

A **third-party vendor** is a company or entity approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Office for Safe Schools or the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) that provides school security services.

An **SRO** is a law enforcement officer commissioned and employed by a law enforcement agency whose duty station is located in a school entity or nonpublic school and whose

stationing is established by an agreement between the law enforcement agency and the school entity or nonpublic school. The term also includes an active certified sheriff or deputy sheriff whose stationing in the school entity or nonpublic school is established by a written agreement between the county, the sheriff's office and the school entity or nonpublic school.

A **school security guard** is an individual employed by a school entity, nonpublic school or a third-party vendor or an independent contractor who is assigned to a school for routine safety and security duties and has not been granted school police officer powers and duties. A school security guard may provide the following services as determined by the school entity or nonpublic school: school safety support services; enhanced campus supervision; assistance with disruptive students; monitoring visitors on campus; coordination with law enforcement officials, including SPOs and SROs; and security functions which improve and maintain school safety.

All school security personnel hired prior to August 31, 2019 must successfully complete their respective training required by Act 67 (see below) no later than February 28, 2020. School security personnel hired on or after August 31, 2019 must successfully complete the required training prior to starting their duties.

School Police Officers – Training

SPOs must meet the following training requirements if the court grants the SPO the authority to carry a firearm, if granted the power to issue citations or detain individuals, or if hired through an independent contractor or third-party vendor:

- (1) Successfully complete basic training as required by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission under 53 Pa.C.S. Ch. 21 Subch. D (relating to municipal police education and training) **or** have graduated from the Pennsylvania State Police Academy, been employed as a State trooper with the Pennsylvania State Police, and separated from that service in good standing; **and**
- (2) Successfully complete the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) or an equivalent course of instruction approved by PCCD.¹

Under Act 67, all SPOs also must attend annual in-service training approved by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission under 53 Pa.C.S. Ch. 21 Subch. D.

***NOTE:** Act 67 removed provisions that previously granted SPOs authorization to arrest, but, upon authorization from the School District, retained their authorization to detain individuals in school buildings and on school grounds. School entities and non-public schools with SPOs appointed by the court should work with local law enforcement and contact their appointing court of common pleas to implement a system for completing the arrest process as may be necessary.

¹ See the "NASRO Training/Equivalent Training Requirement" section on page 4 for more information on this requirement.

School Resource Officers – Training

Prior to entering upon the duties of the office, each SRO must successfully complete the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by NASRO or an equivalent course of instruction approved by PCCD. SROs currently stationed in a school entity or nonpublic school have until February 28, 2020 to complete this instruction.

School Security Guards – Training

All school security guards –armed or unarmed – must successfully complete the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by NASRO or an equivalent course of instruction approved by PCCD. Security guards who are currently employed or contracted by a school entity or nonpublic school have until February 28, 2020 to complete this instruction.

A school entity or nonpublic school may employ or contract with an independent contractor or third-party vendor for an armed school security guard if all the following additional conditions are met:

- (1) The school security guard is licensed under 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 61 Subch. A (relating to Uniform Firearms Act), *with certain exceptions defined below;
- (2) The school security guard has successfully completed and is currently certified under Act 235 of 1974, known as the Lethal Weapons Training Act, *with certain exceptions defined below; and
- (3) The school security guard has satisfied the background check requirements under Sections 111 and 111.1 of the Public School Code and 23 Pa.C.S. §6344 (relating to employees having contact with children; adoptive and foster parents).

*Active law enforcement officers are exempt from the training requirements for school security guards under (1) and (2) above upon presentation to the school entity or nonpublic school of evidence of their completion of the training requirements under 53 Pa.C.S. Ch. 21 Subch. D (relating to municipal police education and training).

*Retired law enforcement officers are exempt from the training requirements for school security guards under (1) and (2) above if the retired officer: (a) complies with Section 8.1 of Act 235 of 1974 (Lethal Weapons Training Act); or (b) has been issued a firearm training and qualification card under Section 5 of Act 79 of 2005 (Retired Law Enforcement Identification Act).

NASRO Training/Equivalent Training Requirement

PCCD is currently working with NASRO to organize additional trainings throughout the state to assist school entities and non-public schools in meeting the training requirement under Act 67. Information on the NASRO training, their training schedule, and the registration process is available on the NASRO website at <https://nasro.org/>.

As of the issuance of this guidance, PCCD has not yet identified an equivalent training to the Basic SRO Course of Instruction. Should PCCD approve an equivalent training, that information will be posted on the PCCD website at www.pccd.pa.gov and communicated to school safety coordinators via email. School entities are reminded that they may apply for PCCD's Act 44 School Safety and Security Grant Program funds to pay for this training and any related costs (e.g., travel, housing, etc.).

Contact Information

Questions regarding the NASRO/Equivalent Training should be directed to PCCD at RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov. All other questions may be directed to the PDE Office for Safe Schools at RA-EDSAFESCHOOLSREP@pa.gov.



School Security Personnel Training

Act 67 of 2019 requires that all school security personnel must take the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Basic School Resource Officer Course or an equivalent course as determined by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).

As of this guidance, PCCD has not yet identified an equivalent training to the Basic SRO Course of Instruction. Should PCCD approve an equivalent training, that information will be posted on the PCCD website at www.pccd.pa.gov and communicated to school safety coordinators via email.

In the meantime, NASRO is working with PDE and PCCD to accommodate the training needs in the Commonwealth. Currently, there are ten NASRO Basic SRO courses available throughout the state with 427 open slots for registration. Please go to the following link to register for a course: nasro.org/training/.

The NASRO course is a forty-hour (40) block of instruction designed for law enforcement officers and school safety professionals working in an educational environment. The course provides tools for officers to build positive relationships with both students and staff.

The course emphasizes three main areas of instruction:

- Function of Law Enforcement – Instruction on the differences between law enforcement when conducted inside a school environment including understanding the teen brain and de-escalation techniques.
- Mentoring Students – Instruction designed to provide tools to be a positive role model for youth, including informal counseling techniques.
- Guest Speaking – Instruction on a variety of instructional techniques as well as classroom management tools to provide law-related education to students.

Please note that there are also opportunities to host a training. A Host serves as a liaison to NASRO, provides the training facility with AV equipment, assists with promoting the training, and handles other local logistical arrangements. NASRO processes all the registrations and payments, provides all training supplies and their shipment, and provides quality NASRO certified Instructor(s). NASRO Instructors and Staff will work with the Host to ensure everything is prepared for the training. The Host will earn one free registration for every ten paid attendees. Please go to nasro.org/host-training/ for more information on becoming a Host.

Please contact PCCD at RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov or call 717-265-8450 with questions.