

## Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation



# OFFICER SAFETY NEWSLETTER



## Welcome

**WINTER 2026** - Happy New Year to all! We are excited to have several live in-person COSS classes in the planning stages across the country! The Foundation has welcomed some new and amazing volunteers! Be sure to check out our new online training that is FREE or at an extremely low cost. We are grateful for our partners and sponsors who help us continue to promote officer safety in the profession!

### Our Mission Statement:

"The Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation exists to promote best practices for the safety of Code Officials across the world; to provide a resource for officials; report incidents; provide up-to-date training and to encourage a high standard of professionalism within our chosen profession."

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## Sponsors



# GEORGIA IN-PERSON COSS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CODE ENFORCEMENT  
OFFICER SAFETY FOUNDATION

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION  
OF CODE ENFORCEMENT (GACE)



JUNE 11 - 12 (THURS/FRI)  
8AM - 5PM

ALBANY, GEORGIA  
EARN ICC & NACA CEU'S FOR 16 HOURS  
LUNCH INCLUDED

ONLINE ~~\$299~~ - NOW ONLY \$175

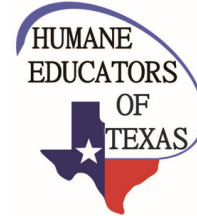
REGISTER ON EVENTBRITE - [CLICK HERE](#)

# Thank You Partners!

CEOSF wants to thank all of our partner associations and sponsors! We appreciate state associations supporting the Foundation and the topic of officer safety for their members. It is important to recognize these associations for their commitment to their membership and keeping them safe.



INTERNATIONAL  
CODE  
COUNCIL®



Virginia Association  
of Zoning Officials



MISSOURI  
ASSOCIATION  
OF CODE  
ENFORCEMENT



Upper State

Code Enforcement  
Association of SC

**CALIFORNIA**  
FIRE PREVENTION OFFICERS



**CEAT**  
CODE ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS





# 2025 National Awards

## Congratulations!



### 2025 Jill Robinson Award - City of Daphne, AL

Congratulations to the City of Daphne Code Enforcement for receiving the Jill Robinson Award! The Daphne Police Department provides training, policies, radios, armor, OC spray, and tasers to their Code Enforcement Officers. Additionally, patrol officers constantly show up to code calls and drive by their location to provide support. This officer safety culture is built into the Police Department and why they received the Foundation's highest honor.



### 2025 Professional Organization of the Year - Georgia Association of Code Enforcement

Congratulations to the Georgia Association of Code Enforcement (GACE)! We commend the GACE Board of Directors and the leadership of President Angel Gray for their support of the Foundation. GACE provided a donation to help provide body armor and has partnered with the Foundation to provide in-person training.



### 2025 Regional Representative of the Year - Chris Capraun (SC)

Congratulations to Chris Capraun from South Carolina! Chris started volunteering with the Foundation exactly one year ago and has brought great passion and energy into his region. He has established several statewide partnerships and attended numerous conferences in his region. Chris has demonstrated a passion for volunteering and officer safety. Thank you for all the hard work!



# BECOME A MEMBER!

## Support a 501(C)(3) & the Profession



Show your support of a mission-driven nonprofit by becoming a donor member! Our extremely low cost membership allows you to access certain discounts and benefits while supporting our charitable work. Consider joining us a member and showcase your commitment to risk management and officer safety in our profession!



### ANGEL DONOR LEVEL - \$8.09/MO

In honor of fallen Officer Jill Robinson (8/9/18), contribute only \$8.09 per month. Upon hitting the one year mark, receive an honorary plaque/award and our complete swag pack.



### INAUGURAL MEMBER LEVEL - \$35/YEAR

Unique opportunity to be an inaugural member of the Foundation. Receive our complete swag pack (challenge coins, stickers, pens) and 10% discount on all online trainings in the first year. Then receive 15% discount from the second year and onward.

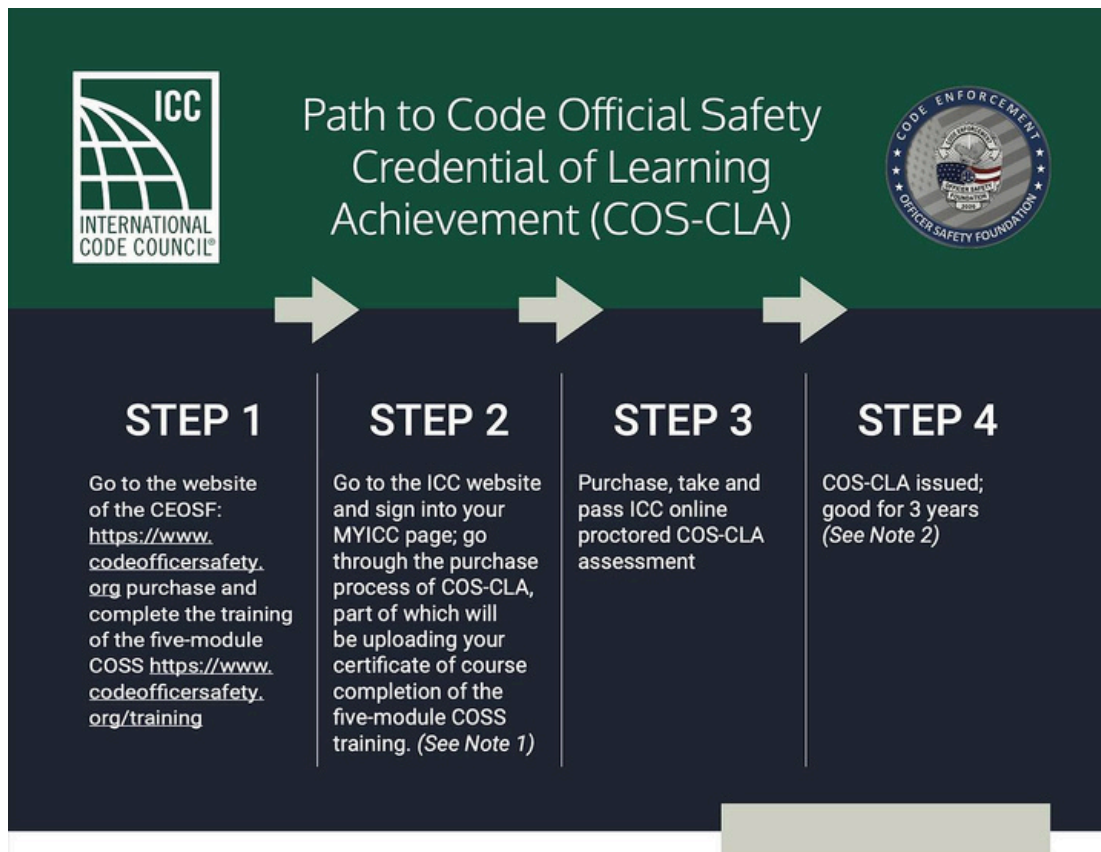


### PROFESSIONAL MEMBER LEVEL - \$25/YEAR

Our standard membership for any government or aspiring government employee in Code Enforcement, Building Safety, Fire Prevention, By-Law, Housing/Health, and Animal Control. Receive a 10% discount on all online trainings.

**DONATE ONLINE: [JOIN TODAY!](#)**

# ICC Credential of Learning Achievement



**Note 1:** If you do not already have an ICC account, you will need to create one at this link <https://www.iccsafe.org/register>

**Note 2:** After 3 years from issuance of the CLA, a minimum 3-hour training on the subject of code official safety offered by ICC or CEOSF will be required to renew the COS-CLA

The International Code Council (ICC) partnered and sponsored CEOSF in May of 2021. Since then, the two organizations have collaborated to promote safety of code officials across the globe. In November, we officially launched the Credential of Learning Achievement (CLA) through ICC. This reinforces the support ICC has for officer safety and the Foundation.

Current and future graduates of the COSS training can log into their MyICC account under credentials and take the 1-hour exam for \$65. **You will need to upload your official COSS certificate prior to taking the exam.** Once you pass, you will receive an ICC credential certificate and digital badge to show with pride! Upon completing the training you are permitted to use the COSS acronym on your business cards, emails, etc.

Learn more at:

<https://www.iccsafe.org/professional-development/cla/>



# Welcome Our New Regional Representatives



### ALEX BISCHOFF (Region 9)

Alex was appointed as the Representative for Region 9 by the Board of Directors in November 2025. He is a Code Enforcement Officer in Alabama and has 5 years of experience in Code Enforcement and as a Police Dispatcher. His agency was just awarded the 2025 Jill Robinson Award! Alex is a Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS).

### INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Our Regional Representatives are volunteers that serve in a government role and volunteer their free time to promoting officer safety and the Foundation's resources. There is no time commitment, we just ask for your participation in one of our committees and at monthly Zoom meetings. Additionally, Reps are able to represent the Foundation at national conferences with all expenses paid. This is a great way to network and support a mission-driven 501c3 nonprofit!



### Thank you USCEA (SC) for Awarding CEOSF as 2025 Vendor of the Year!

Regional Representative Chris Capraun boothing in Tennessee and South Carolina over the last few months. The Upper State Code Enforcement Association (USCEA) awarded CEOSF at their conference and Chris was on deck to represent CEOSF!



## Charitable Donations

**84 Body Armor Vests Total = \$62,277+**

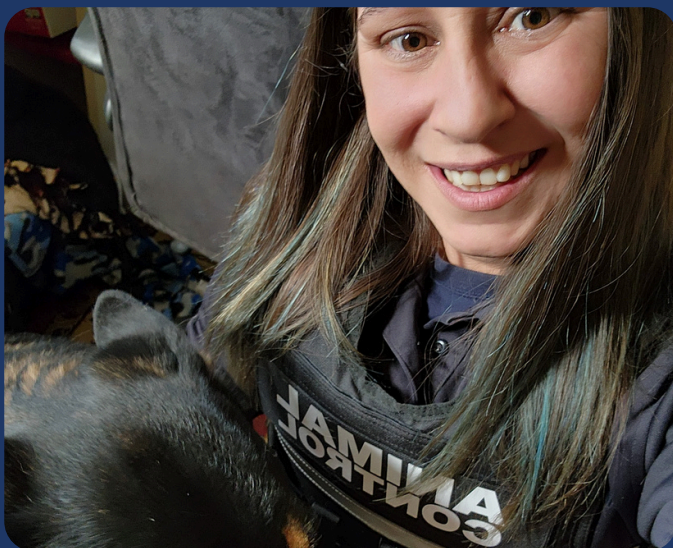
Thanks to all of our Angel Donor's who make a generous donation of \$8.09 a month and every agency that signs employees up for the Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS) training! These proceeds assist us in buying more armor!



**92 Training Scholarships Total = \$24,329**







# REQUEST A VEST PROGRAM

Apply Online!

# New Partnerships



### The Importance of Partnership:

A partnership in a relationship is a deeply connected, team-based connection where two organizations actively support each other's individual and shared goals, prioritizing mutual growth, respect, and shared decision-making over mere feelings, creating stability and a "we" focus rather than just an "I" or "you". It's about building something together, handling challenges as a united front, and ensuring both partners feel heard, valued, and empowered.

Creating partnerships with professional associations was one of the first actions by the Foundation's Board of Directors in 2020. Since then, these partnerships include dozens of state associations and ICC chapters. When professional organizations work together to support the profession, magic happens! It is not rooted in competition or status, it is a love for the profession that resonates down to their members. We also provide 4 free COSS scholarships per year to each partner association!

The Foundation's Board of Directors is thrilled to announce the recent partnerships with the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO) and the Oregon Code Enforcement Association (OCEA). We commend their Board of Directors who understood and valued this partnership as we work together to serve our peers. We look forward to supporting each other and promoting officer safety in the profession!



# New Training at an Extremely Low Cost!



## FIRST AMENDMENT AUDITORS (3 hrs) - ONLY \$49

Have you seen or heard of people who walk into government buildings with cameras to record staff? Since 2020, this activity has grown across every state. They have millions of followers on social media and Youtube and can impact your job if you handle the encounter poorly. This 3-hour course discusses who these auditors are and much more!

Learn about the definition of a public space, how to secure your workspace, best practices for an encounter, and understand the “fallout” of a poor encounter. If you have not been audited yet, consider yourself lucky. They are continuing to travel and show up at government properties across every state. Earn ICC and CACEO CEU’s for this virtual on-demand course. Learn more - [HERE](#).



## RISK MANAGEMENT FOR CODE ENFORCEMENT (2 hrs) - FREE

After 4 years, this is the updated and completely new course on Senate Bill 296. We have learned a lot over the years and this class does not disappoint! This in-depth risk management course goes over national data, case studies, actual city policies, Grand Jury decisions on Code Enforcement officer safety, OSHA enforcement, and developing a policy and procedure (SOP) manual.

This virtual on-demand course can earn CEU’s from ICC and CACEO. Earn your certificate in Code Enforcement Risk Management absolutely FREE! Learn more - [HERE](#).



# BE CAREFUL

Be safe, stay alert, and get home!

## In Memory

From January through March we remember and honor those who have died serving their communities.

January 3rd – **Donnie Moore**, Oklahoma  
(4th anniversary - COVID-19)

January 7<sup>th</sup> - **H.J. Willis**, Florida  
(112th anniversary - Murder)

January 14th – **Dennis Catanyag**, California  
(5th anniversary - Murder)

January 19th – **Theodore Hamilton Jr.**, Florida  
(4th anniversary - Medical)

January 24th – **Joe Schier**, Oklahoma  
(4th anniversary - COVID-19)

February 5th – **Vincent Scanlon**, Florida  
(41st anniversary - Murder)

February 20th – **Karel Van Noppen**, Belgium  
(31st anniversary - Murder)

February 26th – **Reed Walker**, Nevada  
(66th anniversary - Murder)

March 22nd – **Greg Zyszkiewicz**, Wisconsin  
(9th anniversary - Murder)

March 29<sup>th</sup> - **Ashley Lauren Webb**, Kansas  
(2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary - unknown)



# “The Hostile Hoarder - The Eagleville, PA Incident...”

by Kirk Palmer, Master Code Officer (GA), COSCI, COSS

**“People can snap. People have a limit. And some people are just plain nuts...”**

*---Ilona Andrews, Author---*

As code officials, we frequently receive complaints about hoarding from neighbors, property managers, and landlords. Hoarding [disorder] is an issue that is often complex and necessitates intervention not only from code officials but also from police, Adult Protective Services, and mental health professionals because it's a recognized mental health disorder by the American Psychiatric Association.

The National Institute of Health defines “Hoarding Disorder” as: a person persistently struggling to discard possessions, regardless of their actual value, leading to an accumulation that clutters living spaces, compromises their use, and causes significant distress or impairment in daily life, work, or relationships, often linked to difficulty with decision-making, information processing, and intense emotional attachment.

Since Hoarding Disorder is a mental health condition, hoarders can and do exhibit unpredictable behavior. Hoarders often feel shame, fear, or anxiety about losing their items, which can trigger defensive or aggressive responses, even violence, as seen in past incidents where code officials, as well as police officers, were attacked. In this article, I will present an incident that occurred in Eagleville, PA, involving a hoarder who assaulted a code official, and whose actions resulted in the destruction of three homes, damage to three other structures, and ultimately resulted in the perpetrator's own death.

On the morning of June 10, 2021, around 11:50 a.m., a Lower Providence Township code enforcement inspector arrived at 4045 Cardin Place, Eagleville, PA, to perform a follow-up inspection at a residence for known hoarding conditions. At 11:56 a.m., the Lower Providence Township Police Department received a deluge of 911 calls from frantic neighbors reporting that the code enforcement inspector “was being chased by their neighbor who was brandishing a pistol...” Ultimately, the inspector escaped, albeit injured, and was also able to telephone the police at 11:57 a.m. to report the attack.



At noon, two Lower Providence Township police officers arrived on scene and confronted the suspect, later identified as Thomas J. Razzi, Jr, age 66, near the front of the home. When Razzi was ordered to stop, he retreated into his home, slammed the door behind him, and ceased to engage with the officers.



Within minutes, officers reported hearing gunfire and a series of loud explosions from the suspect's residence. Almost simultaneously, officers observed massive flames and smoke emerging from the structure. Police established a perimeter and secured the scene, allowing the Lower Providence Township Fire Department to begin fire suppression on the now three-alarm fire. Just before midnight, officers were able to enter the rubble and locate the body of Thomas J. Razzi.

When police interviewed witnesses, bizarre details about the life of Thomas J. Razzi, Jr began to emerge. By all accounts, Razzi was a loner who pretty much kept to himself; however, several neighbors mentioned that he had seemed “distraught, upset, sad, desperate, and had ‘acted strange’” days before the incident. One neighbor said that Razzi had told her, “There’s no reason for me to leave if I’m going to be sick.” A few days before the incident, a neighbor’s surveillance camera captured Razzi wandering around his yard at 2 a.m., apparently mumbling to himself. The next morning, also around 2 a.m., the surveillance camera caught Razzi “digging next to a wall... like with his hand”, per a witness. The investigation revealed that Razzi had many firearms in the home and apparently liked to make “illegal fireworks” based on compounds and chemicals found by the Lower Providence Police and Fire Marshal, who were assisted by the FBI and the ATF during the investigation.

If this incident sounds familiar—it should, because it’s eerily similar to the Jill Robinson incident that occurred in 2018. A code enforcement officer conducts a follow-up inspection, is assaulted, and then the assailant commits an act of arson. The only difference is that this officer survived; Jill Robinson did not. So, what are the lessons to be learned in this case?

- Best management practices indicate that two or more officers should go to the scene of an alleged hoarding investigation. This helps guard against potential claims of harassment, theft, or property damage from the hoarder, who may be reclusive or paranoid. It also protects officers in cases where the resident has a history of violence. The inspection should be recorded using a body camera or a smartphone. So, why did this officer go alone to follow up on a hoarding case?
- Always have an “exit strategy” or escape route planned out. In this case, the officer successfully escaped, but not before being pistol-whipped by the perpetrator. Make it a habit to mentally rehearse an escape plan when you arrive at a location. If something seems amiss, leave and return with a fellow code official or law enforcement.
- It is unknown if Razzi had negative interactions with police in the past; however, his neighbors mentioned multiple times that they felt his mental health was suffering. The investigating Code Inspector must have had at least one prior contact with Razzi; did he or she overlook potential indicators of violence, such as obstreperous behavior, mania, or paranoia?
- And, this is an old cliché – expect the unexpected.



There is no happy ending to this story. Five families were displaced from their homes after this incident, many with young children. According to the Montgomery County, Pennsylvania government website, Thomas J. Razzi, Jr.'s body was never claimed by his next of kin. As a result, his remains were cremated on July 21, 2021, at taxpayer expense. The final disposition of his remains is unknown. The exact reason Razzi snapped on that particular day remains a topic of speculation and conjecture. Whatever the cause, Mr. Razzi took it to his grave.

Until next time, stay alert and don't get hurt.

**Information for this article was obtained from the following media sources: ABC 6, NBC 10, Fox News, and the Lower Providence Police Department community relations.**

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### About the Author

*Kirk Palmer, COSCI, is a Master Code Officer (GA) with 30 years of experience in public safety. Throughout his career, Officer Palmer has held various positions, including deputy sheriff, police officer, city marshal, field training officer, code enforcement officer, and supervisor/manager. He currently serves as the Senior Code Official for White County, Georgia. Additionally, he is an officer safety instructor for the Georgia Association of Code Enforcement Officials (GACE), specializing in training related to extremist groups, gangs, and in-field safety tactics.*

# Creating a Culture of Officer Safety

by Scott Kirshner, M.Ed., COSCI, INCI

*A culture of safety requires purposeful intent enhanced by action.*

As we enter 2026, now is a good time to evaluate staff safety. Code official safety is impacted by department policies and procedures, safety training, safety equipment, and organizational culture. In order for a culture of safety to be truly effective it must be supported from the top of the organization and communicated to staff on a regular basis. Communicating this information should be included in the onboarding process, new employee orientation, ongoing training, supervisor support & accountability, and department policies & procedures.

The following information is applicable to all code officials to include code enforcement officers, fire inspectors, animal control officers, building inspectors, health inspectors, environmental inspectors, parking enforcement officers, etc. The 10 actionable steps to build a culture of officer safety are written to be proactive, actionable, and applied immediately.

## 10 Actionable Steps to Build a Culture of Officer Safety

### 1. Conduct Daily Safety Briefings

Hold short 10–15 minute safety check-ins at the start of each shift. Include:

- Review of high-risk properties
- Review of recent incidents or near misses
- Crime trends, hazards relevant to inspections, weather conditions, etc.
- Conduct a scenario-based “what if...” encounter

This builds repetition, awareness, consistent readiness, and mental preparation. It also reinforces the importance of safety to the team and that safety is supported by management.

### 2. Implement a Standardized “Pre-Contact Risk Assessment”

Before arriving at a location, code officials should assess:

- Prior complaints or violations
- History of violence, threats, or weapons
- Police calls to the address
- Known aggressive animals
- Environmental hazards (dilapidated structures, hoarding, chemicals, fire risks)

Make this a required step, not optional.

### 3. Adopt Mandatory “Check-In / Check-Out” Field Procedures

Management must ensure that code officials have processes in place to:

- Log the address they are going to
- Provide estimated time of completion
- Notify dispatch or supervisors when leaving
- Use consistent radio or mobile app check-ins

This ensures that the department always knows the location of staff, which is essential in emergencies where time is of the essence.



#### 4. Train Conflict Management to include Awareness, Avoidance, De-escalation, and Response Options

Many code enforcement encounters involve emotionally charged individuals. Departments must train code officials to:

- Integrate safety training into a complete system rather than block or silo training
- Apply situational awareness skills that lead to timely and effective decision-making
- Identify pre-incident indicators and response options
- Recognize escalation cues and response options
- Use appropriate presence based on the situation
- Use effective communication skills to avoid or minimize escalation
- Maintain distance and understand how environmental factors can impact distance
- Understand how environmental factors (low-light, day/night, inside/outside, weather conditions, type of structure, presence of animals, etc.) impact safety
- Identify multiple escape routes
- Recognize when to disengage without placing yourself in jeopardy
- Understand response options when avoidance and de-escalation are not possible
- Choose a force option based on the totality of circumstances
- Understand how disparity of force impacts which force option is used
- Write clear and accurate incident reports especially pertaining to use of force

This provides code officials a well-rounded safety skill set that is legal, moral, ethical, and adheres to department policies and the law. Officer safety training must never be “check the box” training that satisfies a department mandate while failing to provide high-quality effective training that staff may need to save their life.

#### 5. Require Two-Officer Response for High-Risk Contacts

High-risk contacts may include:

- Known violent individuals
- History of threats or harassment especially against code officials
- Hoarding or dilapidated structures
- Drug/chemical complaints
- Aggressive animals
- After-hours inspections
- Evictions or condemnations
- Large events
- Rural locations with long response times

Establishing a policy that defines high-risk contacts provides a process for code official response that prevents staff from being put in a dangerous situation alone.

#### 6. Carry and Regularly Train With Safety Equipment

Officer safety equipment may include:

- Two-way radios that are monitored by a communication center
- High Quality LED Flashlight
- OC Spray

- *Bite Sticks / Expandable Baton*
- *Electronic Control Device, i.e. Taser*
- *Firearm*
- *Body-Worn Camera*
- *Body armor*
- *Trauma kit to include tourniquet, hemostatic gauze, vented chest seal, pressure dressing, nitrile gloves, trauma sheers*

*Departments must regularly inspect and maintain all safety equipment. Certain safety equipment will need to be replaced at certain intervals requiring a process of tracking such information.*

### 7. **Participate in Joint Training with Police and Fire Departments**

Build relationships with local police and fire departments by training together on:

- High-risk encounters
- Hazard recognition
- Securing aggressive animals
- Hazardous materials response
- Crisis encounters with unstable individuals
- Tactical first-aid/trauma care

This improves response coordination and ensures code officials know how to call for—and receive—help quickly.

### 8. **Body Language and Positioning**

Code officials can improve safety by using physical tactics such as:

- Maintaining a reactionary distance
- Use contact/cover principle when working with a partner
- Standing at an angle (blading), not square-on
- Not allowing themselves to be backed against walls or fences
- Positioning near exits
- Understanding environmental factors that impact safety
- Avoiding entering structures alone when a dangerous situation is identified

These simple habits dramatically reduce vulnerability and increase safety.

### 9. **Report and Review All Threats, Near Misses, and Incidents**

A culture of safety grows when incidents are formally documented and shared, including:

- Threats (verbal or physical)
- Use of force
- Unsafe structures
- Environmental hazards
- Vehicle near misses
- Dog attacks
- “Gut feeling” situations that a code official backed out of

Regular reviews help identify patterns, properties, and people requiring extra caution.

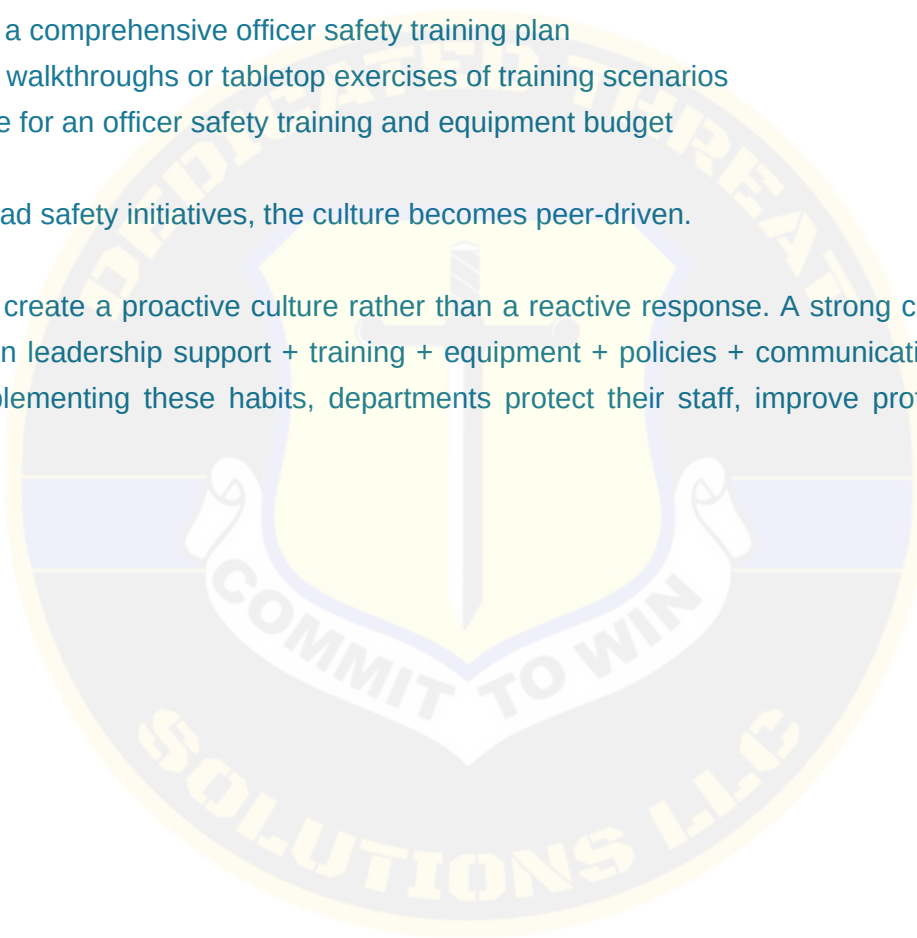
### 10. Create a Safety Committee Led by Field Officers

A cross-disciplinary safety team led by field officers to include representatives from management, executive leadership, human resources, risk management, training department, and administrative staff. When appropriate invite members from city council, mayor, police department, fire department, etc. Objectives for the safety committee include:

- Review safety incidents and trends
- Develop a process to track all safety incidents and create an annual report
- Update safety protocols
- Review safety policy and procedures
- Recommend new officer safety equipment
- Develop a comprehensive officer safety training plan
- Conduct walkthroughs or tabletop exercises of training scenarios
- Advocate for an officer safety training and equipment budget

When officers lead safety initiatives, the culture becomes peer-driven.

These 10 steps create a proactive culture rather than a reactive response. A strong code official safety culture is built on leadership support + training + equipment + policies + communication + mindset. By consistently implementing these habits, departments protect their staff, improve professionalism, and reduce liability.



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### About the Author

Scott Kirshner, M.Ed., COSCI, INCI, has been a Parole Administrator, Supervisory Probation Officer, and a Corrections Officer. He has extensive experience as an officer survival trainer to include lead defensive tactics instructor, firearms instructor, and use of force instructor. He is the author of Officer Survival for Code Enforcement Officers. Mr. Kirshner is the President and Lead Instructor of Dedicated Threat Solutions, LLC.



# Behavioral Threat Assessment

by Dean Phaneuf, CCEA, COSCI

It sure seems like we're living in crazy times...or is it just me? The news is full of reporting on violence – sometimes “random,” but many times targeted. I'd like to share some thoughts regarding targeted violence, often also described as “planned,” or “predatory” violence.

Planned, predatory, or targeted violence describes premeditated acts which are planned in advance. As such, all targeted violence and virtually all mass violence is committed by offenders not who suddenly “snap,” but rather, by people who decide to use violence in an intentional way.

As code enforcement officials, we have frequent interaction with individuals who express personal grievances. It is essential that we maintain an awareness of associated indicators that may raise concern and require further investigation or intervention. The CEOSF maintains a history of targeted attacks against code officials, providing a cautionary tale supporting the importance of awareness, recognition, and action.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, along with most others involved in violence prevention, recognize the existence of a pathway to violence, which progresses from thought to action.



This progression – or pathway presents opportunities for recognition of concerning behaviors, reporting, and intervention prior to a violent attack.

Research by the U.S. Secret Service has shown that attackers exhibit concerning behaviors, often including observable changes from their normal behavior, and frequently resulting in fear among “bystanders” or associates. Observable behaviors, or “leakage” create an objective basis for reporting concerns to appropriate authorities. Reporting provides an opportunity for a structured assessment, provision of resources, evaluation for imminence of danger, and creation of a collaborative management plan.

While targeted violence has existed since the beginning of time, we've certainly become more aware of the phenomenon based on many factors – including mass media coverage and the sensationalism of attacks involving tactics involving weapons ranging from firearms and explosives to slashing and vehicle-ramming. The frequency and lethality of targeted violence incidents has thrust the topic into headlines, legislative agendas, training priorities, and budgets.

Behavioral threat assessment is a well-recognized and effective means of preventing targeted violence, commonly described as getting “left-of-bang” or “left-of-boom.” While we can all recognize an act of violence, recognizing patterns of thought, behaviors, and preparatory actions associated with risk can help to prevent an act of violence from being carried out. Gaining an awareness of such concerns, an ability to articulate them, and a familiarity with reporting protocols can be the difference between life and death.

In practice, Behavioral threat assessment and management (“BTAM”) is carried out by multi-disciplinary teams. Members may consist of professionals from mental health and law enforcement (including prosecutors and probation/parole), as well as affiliates from schools, business/HR, social services, and faith communities.

While the assessment and management of concerning behaviors has become a distinct discipline, it is almost entirely dependent upon the involvement of bystanders – members of the community who are in positions to recognize and report concerns. Bystanders may include family members, peers, professionals, and strangers. Concerning behaviors may often appear in response to stresses arising in relationships, finances, work, or enforcement contacts.

Warning behaviors may include a fixation or preoccupation with a perceived grievance, self-identification, threatening speech or communications, or attempting to gain information or access related to a potential target. Different behaviors may be associated with different stages of escalation, but none should be discounted.

As members of the code enforcement profession, we owe it to ourselves, our families, and our communities to be engaged and aware whether at work or elsewhere. It's equally important that we know how and when to act – whether “left-of-bang” or in the moment of an attack.

The good news is that things can be done to disrupt the pathway to violence. The management side of BTAM recognizes the value of mitigators – valued things, relationships, or circumstances which may help to reduce the inclination towards carrying out a violent act. A variety of resources or interventions may be helpful in mitigating threats, and early reporting of concerns is key to successful protective actions.

More good news is that training is available to expand awareness – including courses and online resources made available through the National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Office, part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis. For more information, visit [DHS.gov/NTER](https://DHS.gov/NTER) – or contact the author through CEOSF.

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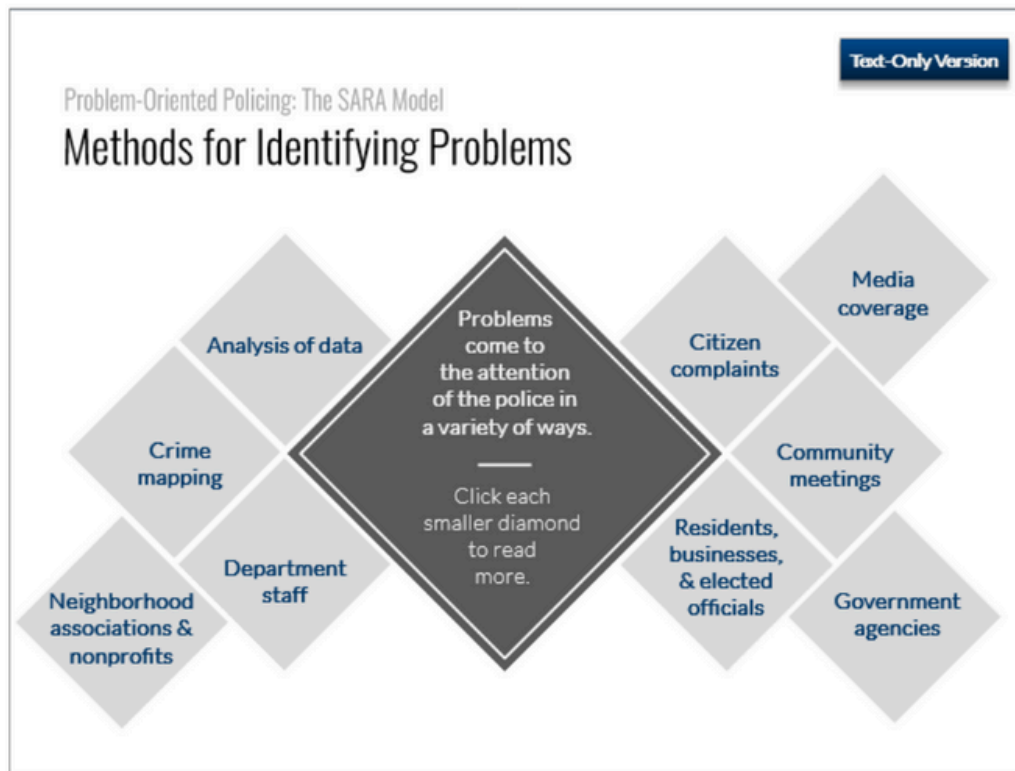
### **About the Author**

*Dean Phaneuf, COSCI has nearly 50 years' experience in public safety, including nearly a decade as a police bomb squad commander on an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. He is an AACE Certified Code Enforcement Administrator and currently serves as a Code Enforcement Manager in Southern California. Dean is a CEOSF Officer Safety Certified Instructor, a Certified Master Instructor for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's NTER Office, and an Authorized Instructor for it's Office for Bombing Prevention. He may be reached at [info@cal-bomb.org](mailto:info@cal-bomb.org).*

# Daily Training Bulletins - Problem Oriented Policing

by Justin Edson, CCEA, COSS-AOA

When I worked at a Police Department, I was responsible for selecting the daily training bulletins (DTB's) that all 150 sworn officers had to complete each month. More than 45 DTB's would be provided and I would review these topics and case law to determine which ones would be most relevant to the department each month. Over the next several quarterly newsletters I want to highlight a specific topic of officer safety that I hope is relevant to you on the job as a DTB.



## Problem Oriented Policing for Code Enforcement

As Code Enforcement Officers, we are an important asset to problem oriented policing. This strategy has been around for a long time and has helped law enforcement agencies target key problems in the community. This could be a local gang that operates in a certain neighborhood or a drug house that Bob and Sue complain to the mayor about. Code Enforcement can be that additional tool that law enforcement needs to abate the problem. For example, when a local biker gang (one of the big ones) moved into an industrial building on the outskirts of town, the police department needed help. The crew was operating out of this building and in some cases stopping vehicle traffic out in front of the property. While PD can enforce criminal activity, these guys were pretty kosher when in public view. PD requested Code Enforcement's help. The Code Enforcement Officer determined that the biker gang was in violation of the use in that zone and began citing the property owner. After some citations and getting the City Prosecutor involved, the biker gang moved out of town.

Code Enforcement is not just another angle for law enforcement to take, but they are crucial in the daily proactive strategy to curb blight and crime. When a city has an active code enforcement program that is addressing zoning issues, graffiti, nuisance properties, and vacant buildings; they are contributing to the overall strategy of problem oriented policing.



I discuss this more in my book “Effective Code Enforcement,” where I describe the importance of a problem oriented policing team in an effective code enforcement program. This requires a budget and strong leadership to assign Police Officers to work with Code Enforcement to address community problems. This can range from neighbor disputes about a tree on the property line, to gangs and drug houses. If your agency does not have an active POP team that also works with Code Enforcement, then talk to your leadership. Most local police departments or county sheriff's have a POP type team. The trick is to get them to link up with Code Enforcement create an effective team.



Think about the benefits of a POP team that involves Code Enforcement:

- Enhanced communication between Police and Code Enforcement
- Address problem properties from both the nuisance and criminal angles
- Code Enforcement can obtain an inspection warrant a lot easier than a search warrant
- Code Enforcement tends to receive complaints from the neighborhood
- Sharing databases and resources between both teams
- Public kudos from residents and elected officials when PD and Code shut down an illicit business or problem property

Establishing and managing an effective POP team is dependent on strong leadership. The City Manager, Chief, and Code management need to support each other and make this a priority for their regular operations. Yes, budget cuts suck! But, do not eliminate POP all together, reduce it if you have to. I worked for cities with 40,000 to 110,000 residents where we only had 1-2 POP officers with Code Enforcement, but we still kept up and addressed the problems. City leadership should be asking about a POP team and what resources are needed to get it off the ground. This type of strategy will greatly enhance the city's ability to curb crime and blight.

I will end by saying there are countless books and trainings out there for problem oriented policing. It is a fascinating subject and I encourage you to learn more. At the very least, look for creative ways to create a POP team at your agency that is built on supporting each other and quickly addressing community problems as they arise.

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### About the Author

*Justin Edson is a Code Enforcement Manager in California and previously served as a Building, Neighborhood Services, and Public Safety Manager across several cities. He is an ICC Certified Code Enforcement Administrator, Certified Workplace Violence & Threat Specialist, and a POST Field Training Officer. Prior to his 10 years in Code Enforcement, he was with a Police Department for nearly 10 years. Justin was the Founding President of the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation. He is the author of "Effective Code Enforcement."*

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# Beware of the Training You Receive

by Eric Hendrix, COSS, COSCI

Most of us try to implement best practices in our daily duties, but can the training we receive be a danger to our safety and wellbeing? I have found that the answer is a HARD YES.

I had the pleasure of attending the American Association of Code Enforcement Conference in St. Louis this past October. I will start by saying it was a great time and a great conference. I enjoyed the speakers, and the activities that were scheduled for us. I got to meet some new friends from around the country and reunite with a lot of Oklahoma Code Enforcement Association members and staff.

I attended a few of the classes offered to us. I was very interested in training that covered the use of drones in code enforcement, so I did attend that. With only an hour and a half for a class it does not leave much time to dive too deep into the legalities and such but it did give me an idea of what drone I may want to invest in.....budgets allowing of course. Being a CEOSF instructor, I, of course, wanted to attend any verbal communication/de-escalation and officer safety classes. I feel the more instructors I hear deliver training the more skills and knowledge I acquire.

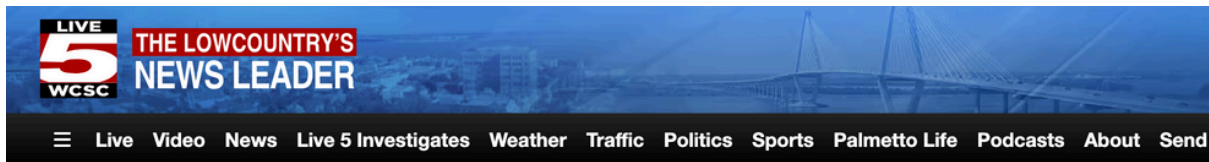
I had the absolute privilege of attending Kerry Simpson's class on verbal and non-verbal communication and de-escalation. Her and her husband were a great team and put on a great class. The delivery of instruction and the way the husband and wife team played off of each other made it enjoyable and interesting. Communication and de-escalation is one of my favorite subjects to teach and I know that if the information is not delivered properly it can make for a dry class, so to see them having fun and delivering solid, good information was a joy and I had a few take-aways from it.

Now let's look into the heart of this article. You must be aware of the training you are attending. When you are in the field and something feels or sounds wrong it probably is, same with training, if the instruction you are receiving sounds or feels wrong.....it probably is.

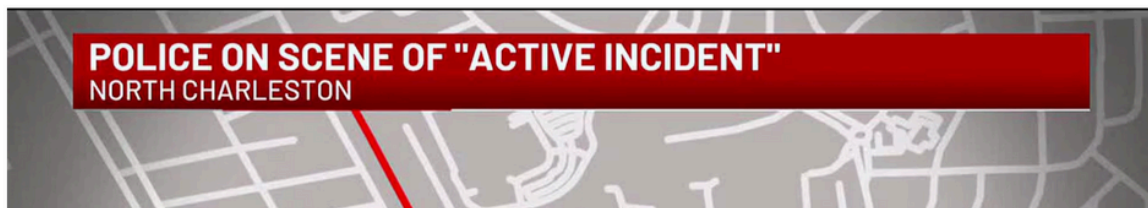
I recently attended a separate Officer Safety Training, which I'm glad I did, because it opened my eyes to something I did not think about - bad training is dangerous.

The class started with what would be a typical introduction: training, experience and background. This introduction seemed to go on and on though. There was a lot of bragging and me, me, me. Most instructors like to talk about themselves, myself included, but they know when it's time to get down to brass tacks, especially when there's only an hour and a half to deliver the training. When the "training" finally started and the instructor seemed to be talking about the psychology of safety he kept challenging the group saying he was going to "blow our minds" or something to that effect. Honestly he started losing me quite early. This went on for a while. In the mix he told a couple of stories of his time as a Law Enforcement Officer that sounded like they came straight out of the "things that did not happen" category on Jeopardy. Concerning one story, as a police officer I cannot think of one LEO that would have reacted the way he claimed.....so he was losing me even more. I became re-engaged once he started posing questions to the group. The first question was, (quotes are not verbatim), "how many of you are parking one or two houses away or down the street from the property you're inspecting?", a good number of people raised their hands.

The next question was “how many of you are still standing to the latch side of the door or at the end of the entry way off to the side?” Once again a good number of hands went up. I was very pleased to see such a number of people using best safe practices in their duties so imagine my surprise when his next delivery went something like, “well if you’re that scared you should probably find a new job.” I almost fell out of my chair. My good friend from Muskogee had a look of disbelief on his face so I knew I had not heard wrong. The instructor went on to say something about “what about the kid who answers the door and is traumatized because you’re not standing where he expects you to be?”



## North Charleston Police, SWAT respond to code enforcement call



Imagine hearing that after attending a class by Kerry Simpson where she talked about her and her husband going to a fallen officers memorial and then mentioning an officer they knew who had been shot by a shotgun through a front door or reflect on my fall article talking about the Code Officer that was met at the door with a firearm and luckily was able to safely leave the property but only a few minutes later that property owner was such a dedicated threat that he engaged in a gunfight with police only to meet his end. I'll take my chances with traumatizing a child because I wasn't standing where they thought I should be....sounds like that child might be doomed due to upbringing anyway. And I will continue to park strategically in regards to the property I'm inspecting. It may not be down the street or two houses away, but it will continue to be the safest place I deduct. I was so glad that he had taken most of his class time introducing himself and telling stories and those questions were about all he was able to get out about physical safety. I wanted so badly for everyone to get out of that classroom before they were infected with bad information.

This was eye opening enough for me to write an article about poor training. It is not something I thought would ever need to be a topic of safety. I know that not all trainings and instructors are the same and some are better than others but, I took for granted that when people attend a safety class they are going to be taught safety and not be told to throw all caution to the wind and forget everything they've learned in the past. Some of the officers I met in the conference had just recently become code enforcement officers and may not have had any safety training up to that class and then they were basically told “you're perfectly safe, don't worry about a thing, nothing is ever going to happen to you.” Please, if you attended the class I was in and you heard these things, reach into your mental notebook and tear those pages out.



**MUSKOGEE POLICE RELEASE BODYCAM OF DEADLY SHOOTING  
AFTER CODE OFFICER THREATENED**

Muskogee Police released some body camera footage of a gunfire exchange with a man who investigators said threatened to kill a code enforcement officer.

Tuesday, August 5th 2025, 6:05 pm  
By: Cal Day



The point of all of this is to encourage you to look into the training being offered, research the organization and instructors, find what you can about the materials they teach and if you have to, contact them for that information. Look for online reviews or find other people who have been through their training to see if it fits your needs and expectations. The instructor of this course said that a lot of the trainings offered are basically “scare tactics” and “money grabs.” I would argue that if you’re not going to teach anything about safety and the reality of this job, whose really grabbing money? Honestly, what’s the point of an organization offering safety training when they are going to tell you that you have nothing to worry about and that you’re perfectly safe doing your job? If that were the case there wouldn’t be statistics dating back to the 1920’s documenting fallen officers.

Each and every one of you have stepped up to perform a job that presents dangers from many angles. You have to be aware of the people you deal with, dogs and other animals, terrain issues, etc. Therefore you need to have a vast skill set to include verbal and non-verbal communication and de-escalation, a tactical mind set when it comes to parking/inspecting properties/approaching doors and doorways/situational awareness so that you are mindful of the terrain, conditions, any animals or possible threats posed by people, etc. If you’re ever presented a training that says otherwise, don’t be afraid to challenge it or walk away from it. A good instructor will listen to any objections or questions and will either be able to debate or justify it with facts and experience or they will see the error of their teachings and be humble enough to agree and make changes.

As someone who is very passionate about my job and the training I deliver I care about each and every one of you out there performing this job. As a police officer also performing code enforcement duties I became aware very quickly that there are more code enforcement officers that are not sworn police than there ever will be sworn police doing this job. I knew right away that most of you do not possess the tools I have at my availability or the training I have undergone. I was so pleased when I was asked to be an instructor for CEOSF because that gave me an avenue to pass on some knowledge and skills and if what I teach saves one life then I am fulfilled. So to all of my brothers and sisters out there, use best safety practices and go home whole every night. Every Inspection, Every Day.

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**About the Author**

*Eric Hendrix is a Police Officer/Code Enforcement Officer in Oklahoma with 8 years of experience. He has completed CLEET Basic Instructor Development, ABLE Oklahoma Train the Trainer, and numerous other law enforcement trainings. Eric is a certified ICC Property Maintenance Inspector and Basic Code Enforcement OCEA certification.*

# Domestic Call Caution

by Catherine J. Crawmer, COSS-AOA, ACO



“Woman attacked by dog. Dog still in house.” That was the message from dispatch. Rarely does dispatch get the whole story so I didn’t know what was awaiting me. How did the dog get into her house? Is it her dog? How bad are the injuries? A lot of scenarios will run through an Animal Control Officer’s mind, based on past experience. The one truism that gets truer every day is the fact that we never get to the point where we have “seen it all”.

Sitting on the concrete porch stairs was an emaciated woman, wearing a sleeveless tee shirt and shorts. She was just skin and bones and covered with blood and bite marks all over her arms and legs. She was crying and wiping at the blood on her arms with what looked like a dirty dish towel.

I introduced myself and asked where the dog was. She indicated that he was in the house. The door appeared to be tightly closed so the dog was secured inside. I told her that I would call an ambulance. She refused. She became loud and aggressive. “No ambulance! No medics!”

I started to question her. She needed no encouragement to tell me her story. The dog, a German Shepherd, belonged to her boyfriend. Her boyfriend left but the dog was still in the house. They share the house together. When her boyfriend gets mad at her he “sics” the dog on her. It happens all the time, especially when he gets drunk and he is drunk a lot. She said the dog is “not right in the head”. I had already come to some conclusions on my own about the boyfriend’s mental state.

As the story started to take shape it was obvious, in looking at the injuries on her arms and legs, that a lot of the bites were not recent. Although she had multiple puncture marks there was no skin tearing that I could see. I explained that infection was a concern but she again said she wanted no medical attention because she “knows how to take care of it”. She expressed an extreme fear of the dog and wanted him, the dog, not the boyfriend, out of the house.

I explained the protocol on dangerous dogs, the court ordered seizure, the court hearing procedure and asked if she wanted to make a formal complaint, swear to it and sign it. She was very willing to do it and did. She did not want to give me the dog at that time because her boyfriend would be mad. When you are on the job long enough you learn that things don't have to make sense. I told her a judge would sign an order of seizure to get the dog out of the house before the hearing. I again encouraged her to seek medical and left.

Due to the likely re-occurrence of her being attacked I obtained an order of seizure and a court date. Because I have been down this road before I alerted the police to the situation for protection. I had not seen the dog at this point although he was described by the complainant as both large and crazy.

The house was situated, with a low driveway next to the house obstructed from view by a very high row of hedges. The driveway could not be seen by someone at the front door of the house or even someone in the front yard.



I arrived in my truck first. I didn't get out but waited until the police car drove up. We talked briefly about the likely scenarios and what may be needed. Two police officers and myself started toward the house at the same time although I was seen first by the woman who rushed back toward the front door screaming for her boyfriend. "She's going to take Max! She's coming to take my dog" It all happened so fast. Her hysterical screaming brought her boyfriend out of the house and both of them rushed toward me. There is no doubt. I was about to be attacked by both of them. Almost instantly, both police officers stepped into sight. The couple stopped suddenly and backed off.

Police are very aware that domestic disputes are particularly dangerous. This danger also exists for animal control officers. Alliances can change in an instant when the abused will align with the abuser. Other family members may join the dispute and an officer may quickly find himself overwhelmed. Extreme caution should be used when stepping into a domestic confrontation. Taking backup along just makes sense.

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### **About the Author**

*Catherine J. Crawmer is a legal expert, educator, animal trainer, business owner retired ACO with 33 years on the job. She is a Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS) and has earned her COSS-AOA (Advanced Operational Awareness).*



# COSS Training Options

The international Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS) training program started in June 2021. This was a training partnership with Dedicated Threat Solutions, LLC to develop the curriculum for this highly acclaimed training. CEOSF is an ICC Preferred Education Provider so the 15-hour class does receive CEU's. The goal of this training was to provide a basic foundation for YOUR safety as you work in government. This program is divided into 5 subjects and covers what to think about, what to be aware of, and tips to focus on your safety. Participants can also download 5 PDF workbooks that enhance the training. In November of 2022, the Code Council officially launched the Credential of Learning Achievement (CLA) on this training. Students must pass the training in order to take the ICC exam and receive the credential. The CLA costs \$65 and includes a 1-hour exam.

Currently the entire 15-hour course is discounted by 55% at \$299 per person. As a non-profit, CEOSF wanted to offer this important training at the lowest cost while still covering overhead.

## ON-DEMAND / VIRTUAL

The COSS training was designed to be accessible to everyone across the globe with this on-demand option. Students enroll at any time online and work through the course within 60 days. You are able to pause as needed and download the PDF workbooks. This has been widely accepted due to this feature so students do not need to miss days of work to go to an off-site location. We have heard from numerous agencies nationwide that use this training for ALL new employees.

This training is great for Code Enforcement, Building Inspectors, Fire Inspectors, Health Inspectors, Vector, Animal Control, CSO's, Permit Techs, and all support roles. Even Directors have gone through this course!



## IN-PERSON COSS TRAINING

Reach out to us to inquire about in-person large group trainings. This option is great for groups that are 50+ per class and we can accommodate 200 students. This option takes 2 full days of training and CEOSF flies our Lead Instructor Scott Kirshner out to your agency to teach the class.

This option is great for the personal feel where students get to interact with the instructor throughout the 2-day training. Email us: [info@codeofficersafety.org](mailto:info@codeofficersafety.org)

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## Contact Us



### **Newsletter**

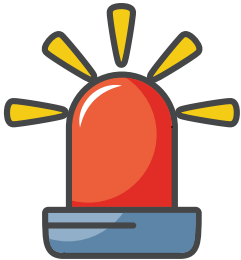
*Please contact us if you have a question regarding our newsletter, would like to see a specific topic in the next one, or would like to be a contributor.*

*For general questions & newsletter requests: [info@CodeOfficerSafety.org](mailto:info@CodeOfficerSafety.org)*



### **Partnerships**

*If you would like to become a recognized partner as an association that supports us or as a donor, then please contact Justin Edson at [justin@codeofficersafety.org](mailto:justin@codeofficersafety.org)*



### **Body Armor Donation Requests**

*Are you a Code Enforcement Officer in need of body armor and either can't afford it or your agency does not provide one? Please fill out our Request A Vest form at [www.codeofficersafety.org/requestavest](http://www.codeofficersafety.org/requestavest)*



### **Remember to Report**

*The data we collect is dependent on you reporting incidents when they occur. The data is used by state associations and jurisdictions to make a case on officer safety legislation and equipment. Whether you were threatened, assaulted, stalked, or attacked by an animal; it is all important data. We keep your information and agency information private.*

# **[www.CodeOfficerSafety.org](http://www.CodeOfficerSafety.org)**