

Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation



OFFICER SAFETY NEWSLETTER



Welcome

Winter 2024 - As we begin a new year, we reflect on those we have lost and honor their name. This was another busy year for the Foundation and we are excited to have donated 54 vests at the end of this third year. We have made new friends, partners, and sponsors along the way. We thank those Code Professionals from across the globe that have helped us promote officer safety! We look forward to 2024 and we will see you at EDUCODE in a few months!

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."

Sponsors



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President's Message

Happy New Year friends! I think we all can agree that 2023 went by in a flash. This was another big year for the Foundation in regards to partnerships, sponsors, training, volunteering, and giving back. I am incredibly thankful to serve with such a strong Board of Directors and team of Regional Representatives. The passion to promote officer safety in the profession unites us and energizes us to do more. The Board of Directors is grateful for all of the hard work that is done by our amazing volunteers! Here we are, 3 years old, and we have donated 54 brand new body armor vests at a value of over \$37,000 and another \$11,000 in training scholarships to professionals across the globe!



We are always looking for more volunteers to get involved and help in any way they can with any time they have. We are just getting started! Our requests for body armor is continuing to grow and we try to donate as many vests each month as funding allows us to. I ask each of you to share our training with your agencies and colleagues. Every time someone enrolls in our training, they not only receive important officer safety training, but the net proceeds help us donate more body armor and scholarships. Help us get the word out!



ANGEL DONOR

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SAFETY FOUNDATION
501C3 NONPROFIT CHARITY

We are not an association with active members and agencies paying dues. We are a registered 501c3 nonprofit charity with the IRS. We rely on donations. I encourage you to become an **Angel Donor** to the Foundation. This is part of our 8.09 campaign where for just \$8.09 per month on reoccurring payments you can become one of our **Angel Donors**. This is in honor of Jill Robinson who was murdered on August 9th. This is the cost of a Starbucks coffee just once a month.

Angel Donors are special people! We have a few, but not enough. Your contribution of only 27 cents per day provides a significant benefit to the profession that you proudly represent. I ask that we unite to support a noble cause. Every person that signs up will receive a thank you package from us and the digital badge to share your commitment to a mission driven 501c3! It is easy, secure, and critical that you sign up at <https://www.codeofficersafety.org/support-us>

Warm Regards,

Justin Edson

**Justin Edson, CCEA, COSS
President - Board of Directors**

2023 International Annual Awards - Congratulations!



Jill Robinson Award

The Jill Robinson Award is given to a government agency each year that puts the safety of their inspectors/officers as a top priority. This may include training, equipment, policies, and general support of officer safety. Local agencies must nominate themselves for this award.

The 2023 Recipient is the **City of Alamogordo, New Mexico**. We commend the City for providing self defense equipment, policies, and training to keep their personnel safe. Congratulations!

Regional Representative Award

The Regional Representative Award is given to one volunteer each year that goes above and beyond to promote safety and CEOSF. This award is voted on by the Board of Directors.

The 2023 Recipient is **Jodi Welch**. Jodi is a Manager in Michigan that has volunteered her free time to help CEOSF for over 2 years. She serves as the Chair of the Charitable Giving's Committee and has represented the Foundation at numerous conferences across several states and Canada! Congratulations Jodi!



Professional Organization of the Year Award

The Professional Organization of the Year Award goes to an Association or Chapter that has partnered with CEOSF and takes extra steps to promote officer safety in the profession.

The 2023 Recipient is the **Texas Environmental Health Association (TEHA)**. TEHA have been great partners and took the extra step of offering our highly acclaimed COSS live 2-day training at their annual conference. The training included TEHA President, Kacey Roman, who attended the training to earn her COSS! Congratulations TEHA!



Welcome Our New Regional Representatives

JAMES STRAWS (Indiana)



James was appointed as the Region 5 Representative by the Board of Directors in November 2023. He recently retired after an extensive 45 year public service career! James was a Firefighter, Fire Investigator, Senior Fire & Building Code Official, and a Building Commissioner. He served as President of FIAI, IABO, and ICC Midwest Region V. He earned his Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS).

KORBIN WEESE (Texas)



Korbin was re-appointed as the Region 10 Representative by the Board of Directors in November 2023. He had previously served in this role for over a year and received the first CEOSF Regional Representative of the Year Award in 2022. He is a Code Enforcement Officer in Texas and a Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS). Welcome back Korbin!

LAYNE CHAMBERLAIN (Colorado)



Layne was re-appointed as the Region 11 Representative by the Board of Directors in December 2023. He had previously served in this role in 2022. Layne is a Code Enforcement Officer in Colorado and is a Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS).



NEW PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCED!

The Washington Association of Code Enforcement (WACE) partnered with the Foundation to promote officer safety in the profession! We commend the WACE Board of Directors for their support and for partnering with us to assist their members.

Body Armor Donated this Quarter - 9 Vests



New Silver Sponsor!

The Foundation would like to thank Tyler Technologies for their generous donation! We are grateful for their sponsorship at the Silver Level. Tyler Technologies met up with us at the ICC EXPO in St. Louis and even helped promote our nonprofit efforts at their booth. They did not stop there! After the conference they became a sponsor of the Foundation!



As a 501(c)(3) registered nonprofit charity, we rely on sponsors and donations to continue our mission. This is a great example of a professional company that is giving back to the profession! Tyler Technologies stated, "We are proud supporters of [the Foundation] and appreciate being honored as Silver Sponsors! We look forward to a continued partnership, in support of empowering our communities."

CEOSF President Justin Edson stated, "The Foundation is humbled to receive this sponsorship to further assist the profession. It is great to see companies giving back to nonprofits like the Foundation to promote safety. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank Tyler Technologies for seeing our purpose and supporting our mission!"

CEOSF in the Field



Texas Environmental Health Association (TEHA) Conference

Georgetown, TX

CEOSF Lead Instructor Scott Kirshner taught a live COSS class at the pre-conference. This 2-day 15 hour course was attended by numerous Directors and supervisors from across the state. We want to thank TEHA for partnering with us and having us teach this important class!



American Association of Code Enforcement (AACE) Conference Orlando, FL

CEOSF Regional Representatives Jodi Welch, Jeanette Loven, Wayne Rasmussen, and Andrew Martin represented CEOSF at the annual AACE Conference. What a great venue and so many amazing people!

We want to thank the AACE Board of Directors for having us at this years conference and for their support. This is a great opportunity to discuss safety and training in our profession.



Stay Alive – Think and Drive; Driver Safety for Code Officers.

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

“Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?”

~ George Carlin, Stand Up Comedian

C'mon, admit it, we're all guilty of "road rage," although we may not have acted on what we thought or said. When we think of officer safety, most of us think about a physical attack from an irate property owner; however, statistics show you're more likely to be injured or killed in a work-related MVA than by a felonious attack.

The Stats:

- In 2020, there were a total of 4764 work-related deaths. 22%, or 1038 work-related deaths, were due to motor vehicle accidents (MVAs). By way of comparison, only 8%, or 705 deaths, were due to violent attacks by people or animals.
- From 2011 to 2020, 17,000 workers died from MVAs.
- On average, each MVA where a death occurs costs an employer \$751,000.

So, is driver safety while on the job an issue? I think that's an emphatic "yes!" We've all heard the term "defensive driving" throughout our lives, so what does it mean exactly? Here's a definition from the Progressive Insurance Website that sums it up: ***“Defensive driving is a set of safe responses to potential hazards, including other drivers, damaged road surfaces, debris, inclement weather, and more.”***

When traveling, use these guidelines to minimize the risk:



- Use your seatbelt;
- Avoid Distracted Driving;
- Don't Speed;
- Be Proactive, remember the acronym SCC – Scan, Communicate (use signals) and [maintain] a Cushion of safety (following Distance of 3-5 seconds);
- Maintenance, (brakes, signals, tires, lights, et. al.);
- Don't drive drowsy or impaired (Rx medications).

Does your jurisdiction have a vehicle policy? I'd be willing to bet that it does, and I'd highly encourage you to read and re-read it because the policy is a legally binding agreement that clearly defines what your jurisdiction will and won't allow when an eligible employee uses a government-owned vehicle. Having this policy in place protects the government agency if an employee gets hurt while using a government vehicle or misuses it and causes damage. Learn it, know it, and live it.



In summary, you're more likely to be injured or killed in a work-related MVA than by a felonious attack. So, if you want to make it home to your loved ones at the end of your shift, practice good defensive driving techniques and minimize your risk. Don't be the "idiot" or "maniac" comedian George Carlin was referring to. Until next time, stay alert and don't get hurt



About the Author

Kirk Palmer, COSCI is a Master Code Officer (GA) with 28 years of public safety experience. He is currently the Senior Code Official for White County, Georgia. In addition, he is an Officer Safety Instructor for the Georgia Association of Code Enforcement Officials (GACE), specializing in Extremist Groups and Gangs.

Customer Service or Officer Safety

by Justin Edson, CCEA, COSS

“Officers should knock on front doors when taking enforcement action!”

~ An Elected Official



If you have worked in Code Enforcement or the Public Safety field for more than 5 minutes, you most likely heard an elected official or “upper management” request or demand that you knock on the front door of any property that you see a violation. Typically, these may also be the same jurisdictions that do not support additional self defense tools or training. Is knocking on the front door to have a face to face conversation good customer service? Yes.

While having a personal interaction with a violator may help build trust and support versus a letter with “NOTICE” written on it, it comes at a great risk for personal safety. And sadly when you bring this up, it is often ignored. This is where the CEOSF Risk Management Letter and international statistics should be shared from the CEOSF website.

Why is this a major safety concern - to approach the front door to deliver news of a violation, fine, condemnation, or impound? Think about the impact it has on the resident. You are informing them that something is wrong with their property, you might be impounding their beloved Spike - the family dog, or issuing a fine. In this day and age, emotions are high and the cost of living is through the roof. A \$30 parking ticket can make an impact on a persons day or life. The emotional connection with the family dog is like that of a child. Now you want to put an Officer or Inspector at their door, on their property, and deliver this news? Typically without any body armor, equipment, officer safety training, or even a partner.

An Animal Control Officer in California was shot through the door and killed because the owner thought the ACO was going to take his dog and arrest him. Code Enforcement Officer Charles Case in Georgia was shot multiple times with a shotgun and killed after posting a red tag condemnation on the front door. Police Officers have body armor, firearms, and other equipment and they are still attacked and shot. But agencies want to send unarmed and unprotected inspectors or public officers to front doors to deliver bad news? No verbal judo or “walk away” strategy is going to save you from a dedicated threat.

Customer Service or Officer Safety

I think we all can agree that speaking to someone is a better customer service strategy than mailing a notice. However, we typically deal with the small percentage of the population that have trouble with following ordinances and the rule of law. Often times these are sovereign citizens or individuals with mental illness. I have seen violators on their lawn cutting the grass with small scissors instead of gardening equipment. I have seen an aerospace engineer use a garden hose as a temporary water main line to his house until he figured out how to do it himself. He then filed a complaint on his neighbor for allowing ants on his fence.

Don't get me wrong, as a profession we should always continue our training in communication and de-escalation, but common sense would tell you this is not 100% full-proof for every interaction over the course of your career.

Recommendation

Trust me I have tried to make the points above and was unsuccessful. How do you navigate this discussion to promote your safety, but also show that you excel in customer service? The best first step is to build support. Start with whoever is directly above you. Once they support you, then work your way up the chain. Share the many resources on the CEOSF website including the Risk Management Letter and data. Show them the data on threats, assaults, and murders. Many of these were for "routine" cases that we handle on a regular basis. Look up California Senate Bill 296 - the State deemed Code Officials are at risk.

A successful strategy that I and many other agencies have done is to do an annual study session on your division in front of the elected body. This allows you to highlight successes, programs, and start to introduce changes to your operations with the data to back it up.

Do not simply tell the elected official or upper management, "no," when they tell you to knock on doors of violators. Let them know you understand where they are coming from, but times have changed and there is data to show that there is a higher risk with knocking on doors. A great example is neighbor disputes. Point out how often times the complaints involve neighbor disputes and you could be walking into a hostile environment.

Be safe, your job is not worth risking your life. I know we sometimes feel stuck in saying yes because the job is our livelihood, but you can approach these concerns in a professional and methodical way. Otherwise, look for a new agency that takes care of its people. They are out there!

About the Author

Justin Edson is a Public Safety Manager in California and previously served as a Building, Neighborhood Services, and Code Enforcement Manager across several cities. He is an ICC Certified Code Enforcement Administrator and a POST Field Training Officer. Prior to his 8+ years in Code Enforcement, he was with a Police Department for nearly 10 years. Justin is currently the President of the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation.

Code Official Safety Requires Commitment, Consistency, and Advocacy

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

“Advocating for code official safety has the potential to save lives for which you may never know the impact of your contributions.”

The new year is upon us and there is no better time to make safety a priority. Safety is an individual responsibility that you cannot delegate to anyone else. This article is directed at two groups: a) Those who have completed the Code Official Safety Specialist training and b) those who have not completed the training. I will start with the later.

If you have not completed the Code Official Safety Specialist training then your two safety priorities in the new year are:

1. ***Register and complete the online Code Official Safety Specialist training***
2. ***Upon completion of the Code Official Safety Specialist training, register to take the online ICC Code Official Safety assessment to earn your Credential of Learning Achievement***

Why the Code Official Safety Specialist (COSS) Training?

Reasons to complete the Code Official Safety Specialist training program include:

- The COSS training program is supported by the:
 - International Code Council (ICC)
 - American Association of Code Enforcement (AACE)
 - National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA)
 - California Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA)
 - Numerous State Associations
- ICC CEU's for each course
- Option to earn the ICC Code Official Safety Credential of Learning Achievement (CLA)
- Comprehensive participant workbooks with activities to reinforce learning objectives
- Comprehensive 76 page officer safety Standard Operating Procedure Manual that can be modified to fit the policy and procedure needs of your department
- Comprehensive training on relevant topics from avoidance to surviving a violent encounter
- Exceeds requirements for CA Senate Bill 296: Code Enforcement Officer Safety Standards
- Highly experienced and certified instructor:
 - CEOSF Officer Safety Certified Instructor (COSCI)
 - IADLEST Nationally Certified Instructor (INCI)
- Instructor is the author of the book Officer Survival for Code Enforcement Officers
- The complete 15 hour online training, participant workbooks totaling 325 pages, and 76 page SOP Manual is being offered at a significantly discounted price of only \$250.00 so that it is available to all code officials.



Safety principles and concepts covered in the Code Official Safety Specialist training include:

- Mindset
- Combat Breathing
- Faulty Assumptions
- Verbal De-escalation Strategies
- Complacency
- Proxemics & Body Language
- Use of Mental Imagery
- 4 Stages of a Crisis
- Situational Awareness
- Conducting Safe Contacts
- Fear Management
- Realities of Violent Confrontations
- Reactions to Stress
- Factors in Violent Encounters
- The “Fear Model”
- Reactionary Gap & Reactionary Time

Upon completion of the COSS training program you will be able to clearly articulate:

- Why situational awareness does not guarantee that all conflict and violence can be avoided
- Why situational awareness & verbal de-escalation skills are not a complete safety program
- Why the mantra of “just walk away” is wishful thinking and not a safety strategy
- Why ambush attacks are the most dangerous situation a code official can encounter
- How stress can negatively impact performance during a violent encounter
- How your “internal state” impacts self-awareness which impacts situational awareness
- How “Time-Distance-Environment” are critical factors that impact all violent encounters

Completing the Code Official Safety Specialist training is the most important and relevant goal for you in the new year and is a worthwhile investment in your safety.

Graduates of the Code Official Safety Specialist Training

Those who have already completed the Code Official Safety Specialist training program have demonstrated their commitment to safety. They have received a solid foundation of code official safety principles and concepts. To remain safe and build upon the learned skills requires continual practice. When it comes to safety there is no finish line. Safety must be earned every day.

The new year requires that you remain committed to your safety and provides an opportunity to advocate for the safety of your peers and the profession as a whole. In a few short years the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation (CEOSF) has become the strongest advocate with a global mission of improving code official safety. You have the ability to join forces and be a contributing factor to the success of this cause. It is a noble mission and one that literally saves lives.

In 2024, consider your role in the following:

- Discuss with your department leadership about the benefits and efficacy of the COSS training program. Advocate that the COSS training become a requirement for all new staff to complete within their first 30 days of employment. Codify this training requirement in department policy. In California, the COSS training program is SB 296 compliant.
- Talk with your peers who have not completed the COSS program and urge them to register. Explain the value of this safety training and that job titles, department names, and jurisdictional boundaries are not protective factors against violence.
- Start a safety committee within your department to discuss code official safety issues. Include a variety of staff to join the committee such as front line workers, middle management, upper management, support staff, administrative staff, human resources, and risk management. Create a well-defined mission statement for the safety committee along with goals to accomplish. Meet monthly or quarterly and always have an agenda and keep minutes. Topics may include the formation or revision of safety policies, safety equipment, review of staff safety incidents, emergency procedures, incident reporting, training needs, yearly safety training requirements, funding sources for training and equipment, methods to track staff in the field, uniforms, communication/dispatch needs, relationships with local law enforcement, table top exercises, creating & reinforcing a culture of safety, etc.
- Post on social media the benefits of taking the COSS training program. Post COSS training certificates and ICC Credential of Learning Achievement certificates. Be sure to tag the Code enforcement Officer Safety Foundation and use the hashtags #CEOSF, #COSS, #CodeEnforcement. (Note: always follow your department policy regarding use of social media.)
- Encourage peers to sign up for the FREE Officer Safety Newsletter by the [Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation](#).
- If your department has an internal newsletter write an article about the COSS training program and the benefits of the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation.

1 Burch N. Four stages for learning any new skill or four stages of competence were developed by Burch while working at Gordon Training International in the 1970s.
2 Kruger, J., & Dunning, D. (1999). Unskilled and unaware of it: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(6), 1121–1134.

- If your department has an internal newsletter write an article about the COSS training program and the benefits of the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation.
- Encourage staff to report safety incidents/deaths to the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation even if the incident occurred in the past.
- If you have a safety success story share it with the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation.
- Consider volunteering with the CEOSF. For more information on volunteer opportunities send an email to info@codeofficersafety.org
- If not done, complete the assessment for the ICC Code Official Safety Credential of Learning Achievement.
- Continue spreading the word about the CEOSF and the COSS training especially at conferences and association meetings.

The Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation is the only foundation with a global mission singularly focused on code official safety. Commit to making 2024 the safest year for all code professionals around the globe. 🌍 Your contributions and advocacy for code official safety are critical component to improving safety within the profession. It is an honorable and noble cause.

Gratitude

As I enter into the new year I am as committed as ever to continue to provide the highest quality training based on decades of experience. I am humbled, honored, and beyond grateful for the constant and overwhelmingly positive feedback that I have received from those who have completed the Code Official Safety Specialist training program. I have received feedback from newly hired code officials, retired police officers with years of SWAT experience who now work in code enforcement, building officials, fire inspectors, housing inspectors, health inspectors, environmental inspectors, agency directors & assistant directors, and administrative staff. From California to New York and Canada the feedback has been nothing short of phenomenal.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all those associated with the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation to include the Board of Directors Justin Edson, Timothy Sun, Jeremy Kovinchick, Kirk Palmer, Travis Guess, and Executive Director Aleksandra Menasakanian. I also thank the unsung heroes that comprise the regional representatives who work with passion, professionalism and respect to include Cheynne Sanderson, Matthew Meanea, Brian Hadley, Jason Arbogast, Wayne Rasmussen, Joe Iliff, Jodi Welch, Andrew Martin, Christopher Allen, Reagan Walsh, Jeremy Cleary, Brian Morris, David Gensler, and Jeanette Loven.

A very special thank you to the International Code Council along with the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation and Dedicated Threat Solutions who put together a team of professionals to create the Code Official Safety Credential of Learning Achievement. This committee included Hamid Nadiri, Ron Piester, Mary Lou Luif, Dedric Knox, Tana Bryant, Lucas Pump, Travis Guess, and Christopher Allen.

The committee met for months to ensure the Code Official Safety – CLA satisfied the International Code Council's high standards of excellence. According to the International Code Council:

“The Code Official Safety Credential of Learning Achievement (CLA), developed in collaboration with the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation (CEOSF), will educate code officials and inspectors in all disciplines with officer safety skills that set the standard in the code enforcement profession.”

Thank you to the leadership of the International Code Council for your commitment to and continued support of the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation and the Code Official Safety Specialist training. The creation of the Credential of Learning Achievement is an excellent opportunity for all code professionals around the world to commit to their safety and earn a valuable professional development credential.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge three individuals who inspire me and have been amazing safety advocates for the profession. A very special thank you to Michael Jordan, James Straws, and Lori Lynn Murphy. Keep up the great work.

Wishing everyone a very safe and Happy New Year.



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 and has been a 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 owner and Lead Instructor of Dedicated Threat Solutions, LLC. He can be reached at: info@dedicatedthreatsolutions.com

The Baker's Dozen

by Dean Phaneuf, COSCI, CCEA, COSS, SAS-AP

From the twelve days of Christmas, to twelve fresh months of the New Year, we have a fresh chance to protect ourselves and add value in the lives of others.

The notion of the “baker’s dozen” - twelve-plus-one - dates back to medieval England. Adding a bit more than required was seen as a way of being above reproach...maintaining a reputation, and avoiding liability. I’ve assembled thirteen thoughts that I hope may be beneficial to your safety and well being as we all begin our annual reset.

1. **Showing up** – with the right attitude | In code enforcement, much like all employment, showing up can be the hardest part of the job. When we focus on negative aspects of our work, we tend to handicap ourselves from achieving success and to limit the cooperation that we receive from others. Get in the habit of speaking a word of gratitude before your feet hit the floor in the morning. Be the bright spot in the lives of others.
2. **Health and fitness** – keys to surviving the “long game.” | This is a familiar resolution this time of year, but as critical to our safety, success, and well being as ever. No one reaches all their goals overnight, and no one keeps what they have without maintenance. Taking consistent, positive, incremental steps can begin (or begin again!) at anytime...but the best anytime is today!
3. **Situational awareness** – change is constant...make vigilance your practice! | Make awareness of your surroundings – whether at home, in the office, or in the field – a part of your daily routine. Knowing the baseline, and recognizing deviations is an instinctive skill, but is best honed by conscious effort, training, and consistent practice. Sharing your observations and concerns can provide validation, new perspectives, and encourage family and colleagues to become more aware.
4. **Maintaining your “kit.”** | Whether you travel light or over-stuff your pockets and your “war bag,” Periodically assess the items that you rely upon and maintain or replace as needed. Consider the multi-tool concept, and make selections that can serve more than one purpose when possible. A clean handkerchief, a sharp folding knife, and a flashlight with fresh batteries.
5. **Continuous learning.** | There’s a world of knowledge out there, and none of us have everything figured out. Take classes, read books and articles, and seek out new experiences. Consider topics outside of your expertise or typical interests. You may be surprised to find areas of crossover, new points of connection, and opportunities to relate to others through common ground. Continuous learning is an important aspect of enhancing your safety...but has many hidden benefits!
6. **Professional associations.** | It’s been said that “iron sharpens iron,” and associating with colleagues through professional organizations or informal settings provides a host of positives. Job opportunities, fresh ideas and perspectives, and the opportunity to commiserate are just a few good outcomes of broadening your circle of associates. Other plusses include insights on trending issues and an outlet for your own knowledge and experience.
7. **Travel.** It doesn’t matter if it’s a weekend at the local lake, or an international voyage. Travel, while both exhausting and an expense, is an important investment in renewal, learning, and diversion from the day-to-day. While a luxury experience is nice, so are the simple road trips, sleeping under the stars, or couch surfing at an old friend’s place. The daily grind can wear you down. Make some time to get away and spend time alone, with family, or friends.

8. **Feed your Spirit.** Be intentional in nurturing your inner self. Find the time and space to meditate, worship, praise, congregate, or simply be still, quiet, and breathe. Whatever your faith, tradition, or practice, ground yourself in things larger than you. Mindfulness of our relative place in time and history can help to better focus on what our life mission is. We need not personally carry the burdens of the universe.

9. **Gather...and Give.** Just as it's important to save for a rainy day, it's good to recognize the moments when we can share with others. We know that it's the responsible thing to put aside for unforeseen needs, but this includes the needs of others. Your outlet may be the gift of time, encouragement, food, or finances...but we're all in this life together, and when you bless others, you're not likely to look back with regret.

10. **Write.** Writing creates a record. While this may overstate the obvious, writing can help us to remember in both the short term and the long. Jotting notes forms an intentional bond both mentally and physically, allowing us to take specific action in the future. Writing can be a gift to others, be it a handwritten note or card, or a text, email, or letter. Measure your words, so that when they're later reflected on by either you or others they represent your best self, whether in encouragement or instruction.

11. **Order.** Take moments to create order within your environment. Chaos can be a drain, and a barrier to both productivity and positivity. Wash the dish, straighten the towel, and wipe the counter. File the papers, put the tools away. Fold the laundry and make the bed. Exercise influence on your physical environment in small ways that bring a sense of control rather than chaos.

12. **Serve.** The code enforcement profession is not about us; it's about others. Try not to take things personally or to make things personal with those we serve. Our role is to provide education and motivation for people to better their living situation. When we share standards, information, and positive outcomes we can make a difference in the lives of our fellow sojourners. Communicate the value of the codes whenever you have a chance. Help others whenever and however you're able.

13. **Protect.** Protect yourself first, then others. If you're not in condition to serve, you've limited the value that you bring to your family and community. Be present. Be healthy. Be positive. Be aware. Be renewed. Be generous. Be known. Be calm. Be available. Be prepared to face and eliminate threats to yourself or others. Be a protector of yourself, your family, your neighbors, and those with whom you serve. Be better than you've ever been, and may you be blessed in 2024...and all of your days to come.

About the Author

Dean Phaneuf, COSCI has over 42 years experience in law enforcement and currently serves as a Code Enforcement Manager in California. Dean was a Police Sergeant, Bomb Squad Commander, SWAT Member, and a Detective. He also served as a Special Deputy U.S. Marshal assigned to a FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. He is an AACE Certified Code Enforcement Administrator, CACEO Certified Code Enforcement Officer, and has numerous trainings related to explosives, including the FBI Hazardous Devices School.

CEOSF Officer Safety Certified Instructors (COSCI)

The Foundation created the COSCI program to vet instructor credentials and ensure that a COSCI has the background, experience, and credentials to teach on subjects related to officer safety. They do not need to be about code enforcement, but any subject that is officer safety. Our Certification Committee reviews all applications, interviews the candidate, and makes a recommendation to the Board.



Timothy Sun, COSCI, COSS

Tim is the Vice President of CEOSF and a Code Enforcement Manager in California with 20 years of Code Enforcement and law enforcement experience. He has taught at the CACEO academies on officer safety and been a Chair. Tim teaches several classes in-person ranging from basic officer safety, to self defense, to firearms, and more.



Kirk Palmer, COSCI, COSS

Kirk is a CEOSF Board Member and a Code Enforcement Supervisor in Georgia with nearly 30 years of experience as a Peace Officer and in Code Enforcement. He has taught numerous classes in Georgia on officer safety, gangs, sovereign citizens, and first amendment auditors.



Scott Kirshner, COSCI, M.Ed., INCI

Scott is our Lead Instructor and developed the COSS training curriculum. He has over 30 years of experience teaching about violence, officer safety, and situational awareness. He travels the country teaching different classes for agencies large and small. Scott is President of Dedicated Threat Solutions, LLC.



Darrell Revier, COSCI, COSS

Darrell has over 20 years of experience in Code Enforcement and Animal Control. He is a Code Enforcement Officer in California and previously served as CACEO President for two terms. He has also been the Chair of the Officer Safety Committee. Darrell teaches at the CACEO academy and covers basic officer safety, animal safety, and biohazards.



Dean Phaneuf, COSCI, COSS

Dean has over 42 years experience in law enforcement and currently serves as a Code Enforcement Manager in California. Dean was a Police Sergeant, Bomb Squad Commander, SWAT Member, and a Detective. He also served as a Special Deputy U.S. Marshal assigned to a FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.



Christopher Mandala, COSCI, COSS

Chris has 30 years experience in law enforcement and Code Enforcement in California. He was a Sergeant with LAPD and currently serves as a Code Enforcement Coordinator. Chris specializes in warrants, high risk inspections, and officer safety principles.



Cody Tweedy, COSCI

Cody is a dedicated public servant with over 15 years of public safety experience. He has worked as a firefighter for multiple agencies holding the ranks of Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, and Battalion Chief. He also became an EMS Supervisor in Colorado. Cody is currently a Police Officer assigned to Traffic.



Justin Gardiner, COSCI, COSS

Justin is a Senior Code Enforcement Officer in California and previously served as a Police Corporal and Field Training Officer. He serves on the CACEO Board of Directors and as Chair of the Officer Safety Committee. Justin specializes in first aid, stop the bleed, and active shooter training.

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 66% at \$250 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!

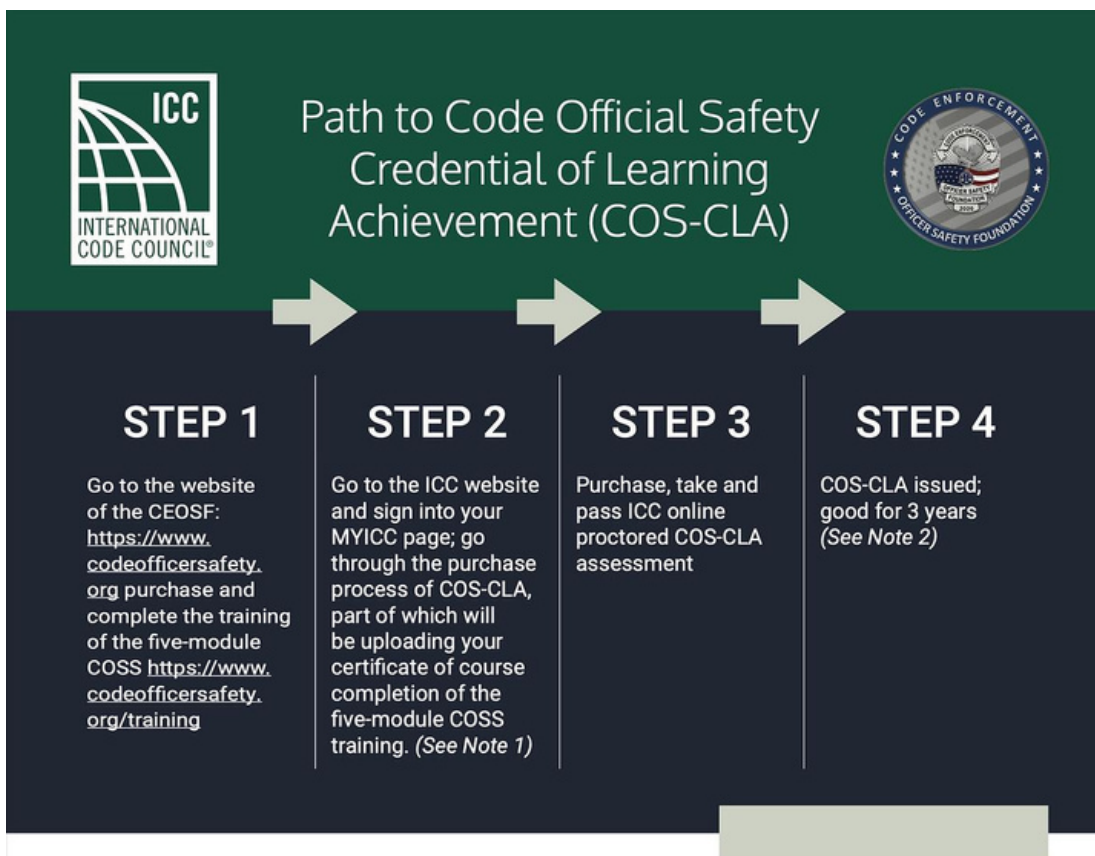


IN-PERSON COSS TRAINING

Reach out to us to inquire about in-person large group trainings. This option is great for groups that are 30-50 per class and we can accommodate 100+ 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

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/>



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
(2nd anniversary - COVID-19)

January 14th – **Dennis Catanyag**, California
(3rd anniversary - Murder)

January 19th – **Theodore Hamilton Jr.**, Florida
(2nd anniversary - Medical)

January 24th – **Joe Schier**, Oklahoma
(2nd anniversary - COVID-19)

February 5th – **Vincent Scanlon**, Florida
(39th anniversary - Murder)

February 20th – **Karel Van Noppen**, Belgium
(29th anniversary - Murder)

February 26th – **Reed Walker**, Nevada
(64th anniversary - Murder)

March 22nd – **Greg Zyszkiewicz**, Wisconsin
(7th anniversary - Murder)



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.



Contact Us



Newsletter

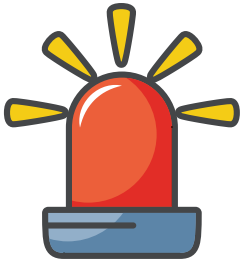
Please contact us if you have a question regarding our newsletter, would like to see a specific topic in the next one, or would like to be a contributor.

For general questions & newsletter requests: info@CodeOfficerSafety.org



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



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



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