

Time-Distance Operator Training

TDI-B02.01

Course Title: TIME-DISTANCE OPERATOR TRAINING

Lesson Title: Introduction to Time-Distance Training

Lesson Purpose: To introduce to the participant the overall goal of the Basic Training Course in Time-Distance Speed Measurement, the specific performance objectives of the program, and the contents of each lesson unit.

Performance Objectives: At the end of this unit of instruction, the participant will be able to achieve the following objectives:

1. Describe the performance objectives of the course.
2. Describe the technical scope and contents of the course.

Hours: One half (1/2) hour

Instructional Method: Lecture/Conference

Materials Required: Time-Distance Operator Training Course Manual
Pen/pencil
Note paper

Reference: U.S. Department of Transportation. *Basic Training Program in VASCAR Speed Measurement*. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, n.d.

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I. Introduction

A. Opening Statement

This document is the principal study guide and reference source for the Basic Training Program in Time-Distance Speed Measurement. It provides a detailed outline of each unit of the course. These outlines list the training objectives and content of each unit. The training objectives express what you are expected to be able to do at the completion of the unit. The content outline sketches the information that you must have to achieve the training objectives. This information will be expanded and supplemented by the instructor's presentations, classroom discussions, sample problems and exercises, and hands-on practice sessions.

This trainee instructional manual is a basic reference document, but not a complete text for the course. Some of the essential information for this training comes from our own state, community, and law enforcement agencies. This "local" information includes the statutes and regulations concerning speed violations, policies and procedures affecting enforcement, and the specific role of speed-measuring instruments in enforcement. Such information will be provided to you by your instructor, through his/her lectures, handouts and additional suggested reference sources. By the end of the course, you should have a thorough set of lecture notes, handouts, and reference citations that, together with the content outlines of this manual, will constitute a complete body of information about Time-Distance speed measurement in your jurisdictions.

Note: Show Slide, "Performance Objectives"

B. Performance Objectives

At the end of this block of instruction, the participant will be able to achieve the following objectives in accordance with information provided during the instructional period:

1. Describe the performance objectives of the course.

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2. Describe the technical scope and contents of the course.

C. Reason

It is expected that this manual will be useful to you in four different ways. First, before the course is conducted, it will give you an opportunity to preview the contents, structure, and sequence of units. This should make it easier to follow the presentations and discussions, and provide a solid preparation for a good learning experience. Secondly, while the course is underway, the manual will be the principal source of the reference material required in class. It is not intended that you "read along" with the instructor in class. This manual certainly does not follow the classroom lectures and presentations word-for-word. But from time to time, your instructor will ask you to turn to specific pages that contain important issues addressed by the manual. Thirdly, as the course is completed, the manual (augmented by your own notes) will be a continuing reference source. When your instructor gives a formal test of your knowledge and skill, the manual and notes will help you prepare for that test. Also, a period of field practice will be required before you are certified to use Time-Distance in actual enforcement. During that period, this manual can be a useful reference, especially if you encounter any operational problems or unusual readings. Finally, as you apply what you have learned in this course to speed enforcement, you may encounter instances where you need to refresh or to check your memory concerning some aspects of Time-Distance operations.

II. Body

Note: Show Slide, "Overall Course Goal"

A. Overall Course Goal

The basic goal of all police work is to protect the lives and property of the public. All of the various types of law enforcement activities seek that goal. Traffic law enforcement is no exception. All traffic laws have arisen from safety-related needs. Avoiding accidents requires well-designed roads and vehicles, and well-regulated driving behavior. If there were no traffic laws, or no traffic law enforcement, there would be no regulation of driving behavior. People would do as they please: they would follow their own rules and take whatever risks they wanted. The result would be chaos.

To avoid this situation, we need good traffic laws and we need to enforce them as

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effectively as possible. There is, of course, no traffic law that is unimportant. But some laws are more important than others, and deserve special emphasis in enforcement. The most important traffic laws are those that regulate driving behaviors that are most dangerous.

Research shows that excessive speed is a major contributing factor to motor vehicle accidents. Further, excessive speed increases the severity of accidents that do occur: a high speed crash is much more likely to produce death or serious injury than a low speed crash. Research also shows that vehicle speeds can be reduced, and that thousands of American lives can be saved each year; but it is equally clear that this can happen only as a result of vigorous, effective speed enforcement.

Where do Speed Measuring Instruments fit into all of this? Time-Distance interests us because it represents one method of measuring vehicle speed. An accurate, on-the-spot measurement of the speed of a suspected speeder is indispensable for effective speed enforcement. In most cases, you cannot take enforcement action against a suspected speed violator, or hope to obtain a conviction, unless you can establish his speed. Time-Distance is a very effective means of establishing speed. It is not the only means available, and it may not be the best means in certain cases. Time-Distance has made a major contribution to our speed enforcement capability.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration believes that a police traffic Time-Distance instrument is an effective enforcement tool. The role of a police Time-Distance instrument in traffic safety enforcement continues to be of critical importance. A police traffic Time-Distance instrument provides a means of increasing enforcement effectiveness and permits police administrators to make better use of personnel.

Note: Show Slide, “Time Distance is only a Tool”

A Time-Distance instrument is only a tool. Learning how to operate Time-Distance is important, but it is not our basic goal. We are concerned primarily with speed enforcement. We expect that this course will accomplish much more than simply teaching people to operate a Time-Distance instrument.

What do we expect to accomplish? The basic purpose of this training program is expressed in the overall course goal which is to improve effectiveness of speed enforcement through the proper and efficient use of Time-Distance speed measuring instruments. It is our intention that every officer who completes this

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course will become a better enforcer of the traffic laws governing vehicle speed.

This course seeks to improve speed enforcement because we know that better enforcement is needed to improve traffic safety. Strict enforcement of speed limits saves lives.

Note: Show Slide, “Specific Training Objectives”

B. Specific Training Objectives

This course is designed to help you become a more effective speed enforcer. You are expected to be able to achieve the following:

1. Describe the association between excessive speed and accidents, deaths, and injuries, and describe the highway safety benefits of effective speed regulation.
2. Describe the basic principles of time-distance speed measurements.
3. Acquire and demonstrate basic skills in calibrating and operating specific time-distance instruments.
4. Identify specific time-distance instruments and techniques used by the trainee’s agency and describe their major components, features, and functions.
5. Identify laws, court rulings, regulations, policies, and procedures affecting time-distance speed measurement and speed enforcement.
6. Acquire and demonstrate basic skills in preparing and presenting records and testimony relating to time-distance speed measurement and speed enforcement.
7. Demonstrate the ability to estimate vehicular speed in accordance with criteria specified on a standardized performance evaluation form.
8. Demonstrate one-hundred (100) percent competence on 25 basic configuration clocks in accordance with criteria specified on a standardized performance evaluation form.

At the end of the course, you will be tested to determine your knowledge and

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understanding of these eight objectives. As the course progresses, try to keep these eight objectives in mind to help yourself see how the various topics covered fit into the total learning experience.

C. Course Content

The remainder of this course consists of a series of units that address the eight objectives just discussed. The topics covered include:

Note: Show Slide, “Course Topics”

- * Speed Offenses and Speed Enforcement
- * Basic Principles of Time-Distance Speed Measurement
- * Legal and Operational Considerations
- * Familiarization and Operation of Specific Time-Distance Instruments
- * Courtroom Preparation
- * Motor-Skill Performance Testing
- * Course Review and Written Examination

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

Before we embark on the actual training, we should consider some questions that have been asked by many motorists, police officers, and judges in recent times: Just how good is a Time-Distance speed measurement instrument? Is it really accurate? Can we trust it?

The significant fact is that the Time-Distance speed measuring instrument is only a tool. While manufacturers design and build accurate and reliable Time-Distance instruments, such tools rely upon the capability, skill, and carefulness of the people who use Time-Distance. Do Time-Distance instruments make mistakes? Generally and practically speaking, no! Do Time-Distance operators make mistakes? Unfortunately, yes.

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Human error has been the target in almost all successful challenges to Time-Distance speed measuring instruments. Speed enforcement based on Time-Distance is not difficult to learn, but is complex enough that any shortcut in training is not wise. The courts are aware of this and are demanding evidence that the Time-Distance operator has had sufficient training and experience.

B. Questions

Note: Show Slide, “Questions?”

C. Closing Statement

How good is Time-Distance operation? It is only as good as you, the operator.