

By: Collier

H.B. No. 593

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to animal encounter training for peace officers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 1701.253, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (1) to read as follows:

(1) As part of the minimum curriculum requirements, the commission shall require an officer to complete an animal encounter training program established by the commission under Section 1701.261. An officer shall complete the program not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer is licensed under this chapter or the date the officer applies for an intermediate proficiency certificate, whichever date is earlier. The training program required under this subsection may not be provided as an online course.

SECTION 2. Subchapter F, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Section 1701.261 to read as follows:

Sec. 1701.261. ANIMAL ENCOUNTER TRAINING PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish a statewide comprehensive education and training program on animal encounters and animal behavior. The training program must consist of at least eight hours of classroom instruction and practical training and may include the use of live animals in:

(1) handling animal-related calls or unplanned encounters with animals, with an emphasis on canine-related

1 incidents and the use of nonlethal methods and tools in handling an  
2 encounter;

3 (2) identifying and understanding animal behavior;

4 (3) laws and ordinances related to animals;

5 (4) avoiding an animal attack; and

6 (5) using nonlethal methods to defend against an  
7 animal attack.

8 (b) At least once every four years, the commission shall  
9 review the content of the training program under this section and  
10 update the program as necessary.

11 (c) Except as provided by Section 1701.352(b-1), an officer  
12 who completes the training program established under this section  
13 is not required to retake the program.

14 SECTION 3. Section 1701.352, Occupations Code, is amended  
15 by adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

16 (b-1) The commission shall require each officer to complete  
17 the animal encounter training program established by the commission  
18 under Section 1701.261 at least once every 48 months. The training  
19 program required under this subsection may be provided as an online  
20 continuing education course.

21 SECTION 4. Section 1701.402, Occupations Code, is amended  
22 by adding Subsection (l) to read as follows:

23 (l) As a requirement for an intermediate proficiency  
24 certificate, an officer must complete the animal encounter training  
25 program established by the commission under Section 1701.261. The  
26 training program required under this subsection may not be provided  
27 as an online course.

1           SECTION 5. Not later than January 1, 2016, the Texas  
2 Commission on Law Enforcement shall establish the animal encounter  
3 training program as required by Section 1701.261, Occupations Code,  
4 as added by this Act.

5           SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.